A WHISTLING FARMER

H · W · RANDOLPH

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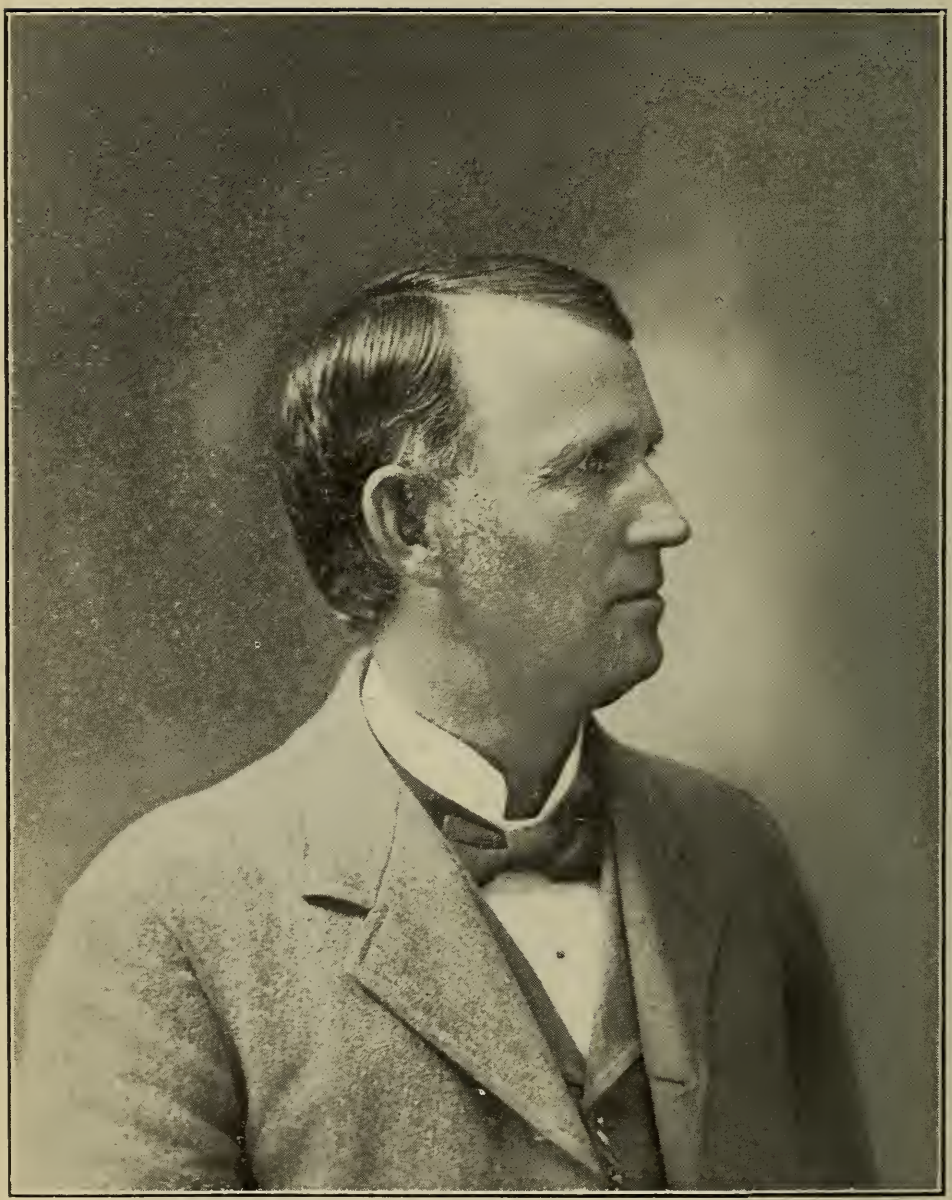
A WHISTLING FARMER



Very truly yours. W. W. Randolph.

A WHISTLING FARMER

BY

H. W. RANDOLPH

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Progress	11
Farmer Jones	20
The Better Land	23
Forgotten	25
The Brooklet and the Child	29
The Thief of Time	31
The Rolling Stone	35
Temper	36
The Way of the World	37
The Streamlet	40
The Indian and the Buffalo	42
Jim Johnson and His Wife	47
The Death of John Barleycorn	50
God's Country	51
Waiting	65
Destiny	65
The Fairy	67
The Sower	73
The True Source	73
The Traveling Salesman	74
Dishonor	79
Burn's Statue	79
The Proposal	80
The Ships, they All Go Down	83
The Death of the Flowers	84
In After Years	85
Rock Me to Sleep	87
Venus	89
The Wedding Ring of Charley Ox	92
The Trees	95
The Warning	97
Johnny Jolt	99
Pleas Prewett's Watch	101

PAGE

The Squirrels in the Forest 108
Hope 143
Is this the Land 143
There's Life in the Tassel 145
Bob White 146
The Stolen Baby 152
Mary Glover 154
I Still Miss Thee 158
Tired Out 159
The Bent of All Things 160
My Country 161
Goodness 162
The Columbia River 162
Execution 164
I am a Woman Still 164
Life 166
Friendship 167
These Three 168
The Battle of Bunker Hill 169
Meanness Shows 174
The Laws that Are 176
The Nightingale 177
The Spirit 178
The Goddess of Liberty 179
Crossing the Delaware 181
The Intent is All 183
The Better Life 184
The Matterhorn 185
The Witches of Salem Town 186
The Ways of God 187
A Bad Exchange 188
The Granting Spring 190
I Love 191
A Hopeless Bachelor 194
Homesick 195
The Babe in the Tree 195
Bedbugs 196
The Hidden Goal 198
The Storm 199

PAGE

Bessie Bounton 200
Elsie Clark 203
The Leaves that Fall 204
The Pleasant Way 204
Advice 205
Dorothy Barfoote 206
Sometime 216
What's the Trouble 216
To a Dead Fly 217
A Passing World 221
Avis Linnell 222
War 224
Out for a Ramble 226
Rebuked 227
The Goddess of Hope 232
In the Spring 233
The Mystery of Man 235
A Borrowed Tool 238
Brothers in Nature 239
Old Dapple Gray 240
The Cliff Dwellers 241
The Unknown 243
Going Back Home 243
The Source 244
My Daily Prayer 246
The Greed of One Man 247
At the Front 248
The Twig that's Bent 248
Had I a Wing 249
The Fairy 250
The Palace Queen 261
Why Not 263
Faith 264
Hello! In the Morning 265
The Lady I Love 266
True Religion 267
The Orchards of Our Youth 268
A Foundling 270
Promptness 271

PAGE

Here and There 272
A Whistling Farmer 272
When We Lived on the Farm 277
Migratory Man 278
The Meadow Lark 279
Daybreak 280
The Heirs 281
Kate Shelly 298
My Heart and I 299
The Soldiers Farewell 301
The Coming Age 303
The Things that Live 305
At Rest 305
Dissatisfied 306
Beyond 307
The Wreck at Eden, Colorado 308
Carmel by the Sea 311
The Fleeting Day 312
The Home 312
Poesy 314
Capito Hill Statue 314
Compensation 315
My Darling Jim 316
Our Old Home 319
Dreams 322
The One to Choose 323
The Bird 324
My Friend 327
The Aged Traveler 332
The Rose 333
Salinda Hanlon's Song 334
Old Lige Reams 335
The Civil Engineer 350
A Tragedy of Hudson Bay 354
My Dog and I 362
What Does it Mean to be an American 378
The Plea of Arthur Alden 379
Memories 388
The Maid in Blue 390

A WHISTLING FARMER

PROGRESS

To gratify a passion
  That is born within the soul,
And finds its sweetest pleasures
  In a long and pleasant stroll
Through the varied fields of Nature,
  Whose mysteries unfold
A language that is written in the rocks;

To leave behind the haunts of men,
  And meditate, and dream,
Or formulate some daring plan,
  And fortify the scheme,
Or scale, perchance, the lofty peaks,
  Or loiter by the stream,
In communion with the worlds that lie beyond;

I went walking in the country,
  In the evening cool and still,
When the sun yet threw his shadow
  From the mountain and the hill;
But I tarried long to ponder
  O'er an old decaying mill
That had ground in the time of our fathers.

And its water wheel was silent,
  Where the stream once swirled and hissed,

And I wondered if the farmer,
With his heavy load of grist,
And the crowds around the river
Are now as sadly missed
As they were in the days of our childhood.

And its roads were long deserted;
And the dam was washed away;
And the mill a mass of ruins,
Where the children came to play;
And the miller,—aye, the miller,
He had slept for many a day
In some forgotten grave in the churchyard.

In a spirit of adventure
I had stolen through its door,
That had fallen from its hinges now
These many years before!
And here I heard the saddest whisper,
"Nevermore, and nevermore,—
Nevermore, for the mill and the miller!"

And I found the ancient wreckage
Of the hopper and the burrs
That had wrought so close together
All along the passing years,
And I said, within me, truly
They both deserve our tears,
As a link, in this chain of evolution.

And musing in its window,
With my arms upon its sill,—
A-drowsing o'er the river
And the ruins of the mill,—
I saw the gulf that lies between
The sleeper on the hill,
And the being that we worship as our God.

Like some vision onward sweeping,
  Now, I saw this homely cast:
Here, the miller stood before me,
  And there, went hurrying past,
Anon, his work was finished,
  And his mill was closed at last;
But time was ever busy with decay.

And I felt a tinge of sorrow,
  As I groped amid the gloom,
Where dissolution's slimy hand
  Was found in every room.
And while I through its portal swept,
  To greet the world abloom,
And ponder o'er the feeble works of man,

I heard the calling of the quail,
  Along the silent wood,
Where the mother sallies forth
  With her merry little brood,
Through the yard and through the garden
  Where the miller's cabin stood,
In an age of the older pioneers.

And here the two creators left
  For all a passing gleam:
In fell decay the one, I found,
  Was drooping with its beam;
The other smiled at tide and time,
  While pointing to the stream
That glides along forever in its youth.

And now, it seems, some mystery
  Had wrought this tragic scene,
For, just beyond the river, lay
  A valley, rich and green,

With every indication there
  That life was just as keen
As it was in the days of the miller.

Its golden harvest fields a-sweep;
  The tinkling of the bell,
And cozy cots still nestled deep
  Beneath the shady swell,
And, oh, so many things I saw
  That all must know so well,
In a long and happy life upon the farm.

Out where the noble forest trees
  Their giant branches fling,
And music from the songsters oft
  Along the valleys ring,
Embellishing the trend of life,
  Where man is ever king,—
The thought, the deed, the destiny of all.

Bewitching as the blushing rose
  That's fawning in the June,—
Enraptured as a mother's love,
  When baby learns to croon,—
Is the garner of the harvest there
  Beneath the harvest moon,
A-bringing in the fruitage of the fields.

The fragrance of its meadow lands;
  The curlew's loud refrain,
The swiftness of the ardent mate,
  The nesting down the lane,
Recalling hopes of other years,—
  But death, alas, in vain,
A weeping willow's trembling o'er her grave.

And while amid this peaceful rest,
The shades of evening fall,
And higher mount the shadow-lines
Upon the cotter's wall,
A hush of silence swings afar
And hovers over all
The fields and lanes and herds of homing kine.

And, strolling up the river here,
Along its winding shore,
I caught the faintest murmur of
Some long and distant roar;
And soon I gained an eminence
And saw the waters pour
From a dam as high as the Niagara.

And, wondering, full long I sought
The miller and his mill,
And close I studied every foot
Of ground along the hill;
But nothing, save some wires
That were singing dirges still
For those who are gone now forever—

And here, I found the hand of progress,
Not the miller's wooden wheel,
Nor the slow and tedious waiting,
For the flour and the meal,
But the strong and steady working
Of the swiftly flying steel
That strangled the mill and the miller.

Of former things, so changed they were,
I scarcely found a trace:
The crudeness of the pioneer,
The contour of his face.

The modern man had come along
To ornament the place:
The builder, with his trowel and his square.

With admiration deep I saw
The wonders he displays,
Nor time, nor space may fathom it,
So wonderful its maze,
While leaping from its dark abode
In thunderbolts ablaze,
It's startling all the thinkers of the age.

Unfolding now, through vistas dim
A brilliant city lay,
With factories of vast extent
Along the ocean's quay;
And flags from every nation far,
A-flutter in its bay,
To traffic, and to trade around the globe,—

From Europe, and the Orient,
And Nippon's flowery strand,
And countries of the Occident
Where Russian shores expand,
And all the islands of the seas,
And each, and every land,
Where man has found the pleasures of a home.

With endless toil he puts to flight,
Those puny efforts old,
He's yonder, weighing out the stars,
Or dashing for the pole,
'Mid frightful storms and temperatures
This daring, spirit bold—
Goes on and on, regardless of the past.

His rifle's swept the bow away,
The helmet, and the lance;
And woe betide the noble steeds
That champ the bit and prance!
The jungles and the lion's den,
And all that vast expanse,
Will be fruitful as the gardens by and by.

To mark the spot where eminence
Lies slumbering in the dust,
He lightly chips the stone away,
That hides the marble's bust,
That points us to a heritage,
Bequeathed us as a trust
By those who fell upon some field of strife.

And, he apes the sprite that deftly spreads
The velvet o'er the flower,
And notes the thread the spider spins
Around her dainty bower,
And weaves away the whole night long
Beneath this subtle power
That dissipates the darkness, like the sun.

The boundless forest fades away,
The marshy moors are drained,
The vineyard's flinging back its smiles
The pruning knife has trained,
And that which he has failed to trace
Is brushed aside and chained,
Awaiting yet, the fullness of its time.

Existing in a thousand shades
Of majesty and art,
He leaps the most stupendous streams,
And stabs the mountain's heart,

And piles his wares of industry
  Upon the trader's mart,
To gratify the yearnings of our race.

And here, among the minds of men,
  I've seen this forward leap,—
This spirit, still unsatisfied,
  That ever slumbers deep,
And all the nations of the earth
  Arousing, as from sleep,
Exulting in a hope that never dies.

And I've found it all around me:
  In the mower, as it mows,
And the language of the planter
  That is talking as it goes,
And the waters of the river,
  With its whisper as it flows,
In speaking of its growth upon the ocean

And I've found it in the reaper,
  That is binding up the grain,
And the power of the engine,
  And the beauty of the train,
And in that mighty motor,
  That we call the human brain,
As it labors for the betterment of man.

And I've found it in the cottage,
  So inviting, with its flowers,
And in the blessings that are born
  Of labor's shorter hours,
And the meetings, and the greetings,
  Out among the leafy bowers,
Where joy abideth ever in the country.

And I've found it in the buildings
For the orphans and the blind,
And the soldier, and the sailor,
And the weak and feeble mind,
And in a host of charities,
For which the world has pined
Since time leads us back to antiquity.

And I've found it in the trimness
Of the arbor and the lawn,
Like a hope that springeth ever
At the coming of the dawn,
And in that peaceful slumber
When the working day is gone,
And the toiler sinks to rest among his family.

And I've found it in a struggle
For the freedom of the mind,
That has wounded superstition now
And left it, faint, behind,
And ushered in an era, too,
Of marvels more sublime
Than anything the ancient Records show.

And I've found it in the factory,
In the shuttle and the loom,
That are turning out the fabrics
For the bride, and for the groom,
And it's always stamped with modesty
Upon the cheeks that bloom;
For labor is the savior of the world.

And it's present on the ocean,
In its flight around the earth,—
And the hamlet and the village
That are springing into birth,—

Yet, many of our countrymen
  Still fail to know its worth;
For progress is the hope of future ages.

Roll on and on, thou blessed source,
  Of endless progress, roll!
That all who be may find at last
  A culminating goal
In some sequestered vale of death
  That liberates the soul,
To rise again upon a higher plane.

FARMER JONES

My wife she makes her coffee fine,
And I just drink it down like wine;
And so I love this helper mine,
  Because she's sweet as honey.

And we got married long ago.
How long? Let's see! Well, I don't know,—
For time glides by with such a flow
  When two are hap'ly mated.

And still it seems, since now and then
The years are round, 'bout six or ten,
But I'd not wage a penny when
  We stood before the altar.

And we've some children,—three or four,—
I think that's right; but I'm not sure.
Hey there, you kids, behind the door,
  Come out and let me count you!

There's Mat and May and Till and Ted,
And twins upstairs that's still in bed,
And what's that, Molly, what you said
About the ones that's absent?

Why, yes, that's so! There's some at school,
There's John and Jay and Jude and Jule,
And Helen here upon her stool
To mend the children's clothing.

And, oh, my heart, there's some more still:
There's Ben and Gabe and Frank and Will,
That early went our ranks to fill,
And fight the German nation.

Now that seems strange as strange can be,
But I've not counted them, you see,
Since our dear sons went o'er the sea
To spread the cause of freedom.

But then, of course, we're growing old;
And yet such things are needless told,—
For why of late, our feet get cold,
When wife and I go riding.

But we don't care; we're happy still.
When death comes by and leaves a chill,
For, she and I have had our fill,
Of life's exquisite pleasures.

And yet we're strong,—both she and I,—
In limb, and nerve, and sparkling eye,
And, well, we know the reason why:
It's love for one another.

And in the midst of all that's wrong,
This love has been our hobby long,

Assisted by some dear old song,
They've bound our hearts together.

And in this field of changeless right
In which we've found so much delight,
Preserving still with all our might,
We stand upon our honor.

And pray, what more may mortals do
Than fearlessly to thus pursue
The ways of peace,—and justice, too,—
That fail so oft our neighbor?

These flour sacks and hams of meat,
And things our soldiers love to eat,
'Fore God, we think, they're far more sweet
Than any prayer that's offered.

The golden rule's the rule for us,
For oft it smothers down a fuss,
And when it don't, we take a buss,
And jolly on together.

And so we love our fellow man,
And do for him whate'er we can,
Because we think the better plan
Extends beyond the fam'ly.

And of the sick, and of the poor,
Who knock and knock upon our door,
Sometimes almost a half a score
Depart and leave their blessings.

And thus it's been since we were wed;
The worthy ones are always fed,
And early then we're off to bed
And lose ourselves in slumber.

With no regrets for what we've done,
We calmly slumber, every one,
Till mounts again the rising sun,
  Beyond the distant mountains.

And so we've lived an honest life,—
Myself, my children, and my wife,—
And by such means we've buried strife
  Too deep for resurrection.

And as we've lived we hope to die,
Nor do you need to ask us why,
For we expect some by and by
  Will find us blessed forever.

Out yonder where the wild woods wave,
And cawing crows and ravens rave,
Some day you'll find our humble grave:
  Asleep,—beside our children.

And what may lie beyond that room,
Wherein no flowers ever bloom,—
Beyond, afar, beyond the tomb,—
  We leave this with the Master.

THE BETTER LAND

Addressing its mate, a little bird said:
  "My dearest, let's fly far away, far away,
To a region that's covered all over with bread,
  Where pleasures abide all the day, all the day;

"Where the shot of the hunter is scarce ever heard,
  And the hawks never hide in the sky,

Oh, it's a blessed retreat for each little bird,—
It's the home of the sweet by and by.

"Where the storms never rise, and the floods never come,
And there's never a thought of the drouth,
In that haven of rest, where the wild pheasant drums,
In that beautiful land of the south.

"Where the sun rises bright in the soft, gentle morn,
Bringing pleasures that few will believe,
And it sparkles all day o'er the wide fields of corn,
Till it sinks to its rest in the eve."

"What! Exchange our old home and our glade in the hills
For a sunshine that's bright in the morn;
And broad flowing rivers and murmuring rills
For a few paltry acres of corn?

"I'd fight to the death for the land of my birth,
With a beak that is strong in its might;
For all other lands are a pigmy of worth
When this one has vanished from sight.

"There's the nest that we built in yon tall swinging tree,
In the heyday of life's early morn;
And my heart ever leaps at the sight of the sea,
And the place where our birdlings were born.

"And here's where I welcomed my first peep of day,
And here's where I first made a flight;
And here I shall live till the Master shall say:
'Your evening has merged into night.'"

FORGOTTEN

Near a cove along the mountains,—
  And a river deep and bold
Where the dashings of the fountains
  Carry down their sands of gold,—
There's a valley, like a treasure
  Lying prone beneath the sky,
Where the toilers smile with pleasure
  O'er their fields of corn and rye;
And a mansion, decked with beauty,
  Like the smiling of a bride,
In the autumn of the season
  And the quiet eventide.
    In the quiet eventide it was,
      In the quiet eventide,—
    In the autumn of the season
      And the quiet eventide.

And here a man was walking out,
  Slowly walking to and fro,
And a-walking and a-talking sad
  In muffled murmurs low.
And then an inspiration came
  And his thoughts began to flow,
A-thinking in, and drinking in,
  The times of long ago.
And near him now departed friends
  Went strolling down the lane,
And he himself was sound asleep,—
  A little child again.
    A little child again he was,
      A little child again,—
    And he himself was sound asleep
      A little child again.

And, then, in looking backward,
He wondered long to know,
How time had fled so rapidly
In walking to and fro;
And what he'd done along the years,
That are leading to the shore,
Where time and opportunities
Alas! will be no more.
Another turn, upon life's road,
And he, a full-grown man,
Had seen so many cherished hopes
All wrecked upon the strand,
All wrecked upon the strand they were,
All wrecked upon the strand,—
He'd seen so many cherished hopes
All wrecked upon the strand.

And when he turned him round about,—
An old and feeble man,—
And sought within his cloistered home
To consummate his plan,
Much proof he found, in looking o'er
His records, dim and old,—
Ambition rife, had wrecked his life,
For preference and gold.
And when the last turn in his road
Was breaking on his sight,
With years of youth and jollity,
A-merging into night,
A-merging into night, so dark,
A-merging into night,—
With years of youth and jollity
A-merging into night;

'Twas then he called his friends around,—
In whispers soft and low,—

And he told them he had troubles that
The world should never know;
But in the evening of his life
He had evolved a plan,
To scatter wide his millions for
The betterment of man.
"This guilty gold, and stocks and bonds,
And fields of corn and cotton,
And must I leave them all behind,
To die and be forgotten?
To die and be forgotten here,
To die and be forgotten,—
And must I leave them all behind
To die and be forgotten?"

And while the shades of evening crept
Around him, cold and still,
He sought behind his bolted doors,
The making of his will.
But, suddenly, some steps he heard,
Come stealing down the hall,
And open flung his door wide.
With dark, and dismal scrawl:
"No lock nor key can hinder me!"
The phantom said, and bowed,
Then in its place were crape and lace,
A coffin and a shroud,
A coffin and a shroud were there,
A coffin and a shroud,—
Then in its place were crape and lace,
A coffin and a shroud.

"Ho, guardsmen, friends, and servants all!
There's thieves within my room,
They come and go, like shadows, though,
As noiseless as the tomb."

"Where, master, where?" "Why, there and there!
See, the leader wears a frown.
Advance, my guardsmen, fearlessly,—
Advance, and cut them down!"
They bore him to his chamber like
Some slow, and solemn pall,
Then all the guards, and servants, too,
Went mutt'ring down the hall,
A-mutt'ring down the hall, they went.
A-mutt'ring down the hall,—
Then all his guards, and servants, too,
Went mutt'ring down the hall.

"Remorse," he cried, "remorse at last,—
Remorse, for life and death!
My feeble pulse, my failing heart,
Alas, my fleeting breath!"
For he had seen, upon the hill,
His richly tinseled tomb,
And guards about its iron rail
Where gaudy flowers bloom.
But while the throng still surged along.
Admiring much the scene,
He heard no sighs for him who lies
Asleep beneath the green.
Asleep beneath the green out there
Asleep beneath the green,—
He heard no sighs for him who lies
Asleep beneath the green.

No more, I see him walking now,
A-walking to and fro,
A-walking and a-talking now
In muffled murmurs low;

Nor is there aught to stir him now,
And cause his thoughts to flow,
A-thinking in and drinking in
The times of long ago,
Nor does he see departed friends
Go strolling down the lane,
For he has fallen fast asleep,
A little child again.
A little child again, alas!
A little child again,—
For he has fallen fast asleep
A little child again.

To shadow forth the sum
Of man's existence here,
A brain was given him
To think, and conjure up
The servitude of thought.
A beacon, as it were,—
A beacon light to flood
The pathways of the mind,
Along the road to where.

THE BROOKLET AND THE CHILD

When the sunshine of the morning
Comes a-bounding o'er the hills,
And youthful hearts are swept away
By Nature's subtle thrills,
In the summer of the season,
When the songster sings his lay,
A little child had wandered off,
Along the branch to play.
And as she loitered on its brink,
Intent upon her theme,

I heard the prattle of her talk
About the passing stream.

"How bright your tiny waters glide,
How wonderfully fair;
And oft I dream of you by night
Above our winding stair.
And won't you tell me, little brook,
Tell me the reason why,
That you were made in such a way
That you can never die;
While I am born of tender flesh,
And flourish for a day,
And, like the stubble of the fields,
I wither and decay?
And why should this, my portion be,
And all my pleasures sever,
While night and day continually
You babble on forever."
"Nay, nay, not true, my little miss,"
The brooklet made reply,
"The Lord hath made us much alike,
You'll learn this by and by.
And still, a change will come to you,
As one will come to me,
When I am buried deep at last
Beneath the briny sea.
And while I sleep a season there,
Embraced within its wave,
You, too, will find a resting-place,
Within your narrow grave.

"But we will rise again, sweet child,
I, when drifting in my cloud,
And you, immensity may seek,
Untrammeled by your shroud.

This long refreshing sleep is but
A blessing in disguise,—
A screen that hides the missing link,
That penetrates the skies.
Have faith, my little sister, faith,
The laws of growth must win,
And in some future summertime,
We two will meet again.
Not here, along this shelving bank,
Beneath this tangled heather,
But yonder, in the depths of space,
Among the endless ether.
And while I grace some setting sun,
With tints of purple grand,
I'll watch for you, my little friend,
Out in your spirit land.
Now, go and join your mates again
In prank of childish play,
My master's calling for me loud,—
My master, gravity.
And seek the broader realm of life,
Where love and hope abides
For naught can change your destiny,
God's providence provides.

THE THIEF OF TIME

"To-morrow," says the thief of time,
"To-morrow,—that will do."
So every age and every clime
These fallacies pursue.

Her work we see in many things
Around us every day,

And unto all, she sweetly sings
The summertime away.

But unto some,—the very wise,—
She passes out of sight.
Where she can flaunt her thin disguise,
She takes the most delight.

The indolent have been her field
Of operations long;
And here she dearly loves to wield
Her tantalizing song.

Go, rouse the sluggard from his sleep,
The idler from his play;
And listen, while their murmurs sweep,
In cadences away.

The farmer says his grain can wait,
And off he goes to town;
The watcher slumbers by his gate;
The maiden, by her gown.

The angler's nodding o'er his rod,—
Some turtle steals his bait;
When evening comes, he'll homeward plod,
Deploring, loud, his fate.

"To-morrow," said the thief of time,
"To-morrow,—that will do,"
So every age and every clime
These fallacies pursue.

A messenger, upon his steed,
Went dashing far and wide,
Nor did he stay, nor stop to plead,
But ever, loudly cried:

"A flood, a flood!—an awful flood
Comes dashing down the vale!
Be quick to fly, or else your blood
Will crimson wide its trail."

But some, they tarried for the show,
To watch the waters rave,
And down the churchyard, in a row,
You'll find them in their grave.

They heard the song the siren sings,
And prone they were to list,
And beggars oft, as well as kings,
Are numbered with the missed.

I saw a youth of noble mien,
Retiring for the night,
And through another window pane,
A trembling maiden white.

In agitation, to and fro,
She paced, alone, the floor,
And then she turned, with mutters low,
The lock upon her door.

Adown the pathway,—swiftly now,
The hour was growing late,—
And then she paused and made a vow,
And slammed aloud the gate.

The moon rose o'er the distant hills,—
A softly brilliant moon,—
But love had fled for one who thrills
A lady's heart in June.

The flowers that her lover bought
Lay wilting in his room,

Until the lady, whom he sought,
In disappointed gloom

Burned all the letters he had sent,
To light her kitchen fire;
And now his days and nights are spent
In dissipating ire.

For she who waited for him long
Could wait for him no more,—
With cheery music and the song,
His rapping on the door.

And thus it was the deed was done,
Without a word of strife;
And promptness here, again, had won
A true, and noble wife.

Like streams that turn the wheels around
With constancy and power,
His rival came and searched the town
For every fragrant flower.

And these he laid upon the arm,
Of one he loved so well,
With what result and lasting charm,
I scarcely need to tell.

The waters went upon their way,
The mill was left behind,
And long the years, and sad the day,
The millers ceased to grind.

And—so it is: "To-morrow yet,—
To-morrow," says the thief.
"To-morrow, with its sad regret,
To-morrow, with its grief!"

THE ROLLING STONE

Down the brooklet, down the river,
Down the ages that have flown,
Rolling over, rolling over,
Once I met a little stone.

Down the mountain, down the valley,
Down the sloping of the hill,—
Always plodding on its journey,
Always rolling over still.

"Whither now? I pray you tell me.
Every movement means a loss,
Why not stop and rest forever
Here, beneath this golden moss?"

"Aye, my friend," replied the bowlder,
"There's a being wiser still,
Than His creature, who has asked me,
Why I'm rolling down the hill.

"Hearest thou yon warbling songster?
He but answers with his song
The command of his Creator:
'Move along, sir, move along.'

"Yonder sweep His starry systems;
Here's the motion of His wave,
See, the Master's moving ever.
There's no rest, this side the grave.

"Here's His spring, beside the pond, sir,
Gushing forth with sparkling life,
And whither now? glass of water,
For your daughter and your wife.

"Wisdom lieth all around us,
Ever sounding loud her gong,
God hath spoken. Why upbraid him?
Move along, sir, move along!

"I'm a bowlder, you're my brother,
Both are subject to His laws,
And I warn you, O my kinsman,
Nature never seeks a pause.

"And, with all there is of motion,
God is wonderfully strong,
And He's told us, through creation:
'Move along, sir, move along!' "

TEMPER

If temper in your friend should show,
Go thou straightway and bow to him,
For temper, let me tell you so,
Is well-nigh all there is to him.
For what is man without this flame,
That ever burns its way along?—
Just rotten wood and flimsy shame,
Unless he's strong, extremely strong.
In temper, then, go seek your prize,
And gladly hail it with delight,
For in this principle there lies
The luminosity of might.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

I SUPPOSE you've heard this story
With its never-ending din,
Like some goblin, gray and hoary,
Ever trying to break in.
Yes, you've doubtless heard it often,
Knocking, knocking, on your door,
But, for fear some one's forgotten,
I am telling it once more.

Billy Bottle had a brother,
And this brother owned a mill, —
Bang and *rattle* down the valley,
Where the tumbling waters spill.
And their father, back in childhood,
He had taught his boys how,—
One, to saw, and saw the lumber,
And the other one to plow.
And so, Johnny, Johnny Bottle,—
He was master of his mill,
And his brother, Billy Bottle,
Owned a villa o'er the hill.
And they prospered in their business,
With their labor and their trade,
And they always banked some money,
Every venture that they made.
But now Johnny, he grew restless,—
As a miller often will,—
With this *clatter, bang,* and *rattle,*
That is ever at it still.
And the trees, they grew so slowly,
That in time, it was, he found,

That the farmers made more money,
From the tillage of the ground.
So he went and told his brother,
How he longed to get away,
And be mowing of the meadow,
And a-tossing of the hay.
And they talked the matter over,
As two brothers often will,
But Billy saw the farm alone,
Not the miller and his mill.

And while he led his brother out
Far strolling arm in arm,
Of this and that, in glowing terms,
He told about the farm.
Now, these brothers had an uncle,
Isaac Walton, if you will,
Who had often looked with pleasure
On the profits of the mill;
And this uncle was a farmer,
And he owned a strapping farm,
That was ample with its acres
Any ruralist to charm.
And its richness and its fruitage
Furnished many with a theme;
And its buildings and its beauty
Were as haunting as a dream;
And his success was so noted
That no longer was it told,
"Look at Walton! See the wizard.
Every venture turns to gold."
And ere long these two had traded,
Consummating every wish;
So the one could raise potatoes,
And the other one could fish,

And Johnny told his wife of this,
When he got home again,
And danced him all around the room.
And brought his fiddle in,
And played "Old Arkansas," he did,
With all his youthful skill,
Because he thought he'd made a hit
In trading off his mill.
And Walton bought a lot of hooks,
A basket, and some line,
And smiled so much his friends declared:
"It's fishing on his mind!"
But when at last he'd settled down,
It wasn't very long,
Until his neighbors all could see
The mill was going wrong.
And oft it was the water wheel,
Or else the saw to file,
And Walton's face began to change,—
A-wearing off the smile.

And yet he had a longing still,
Expressive of a wish,
And then he'd take his hook and line
And saunter off to fish.
And time it was, and time again,
When Walton was away,
The sawlog men would come to mill
And wait for him all day.
And so it was he lost his trade,—
The custom of his mill,—
Because the fish will better bite
When everything is still.
And Johnny, too, his friends all saw
He couldn't farm at all;

For once he went to planting corn,
Commencing in the fall.
And yet, this man, he knew it all
Around his mill and saw,
But on the farm, he spent some years
In learning *gee!* and *haw!*
And some declare he's often seen,
When days are warm and still,
To take his chair out on the porch
And listen to the mill.
Or while he sits around his home,
His mind seems all a blank,
And loud he plays the fiddle while
The weeds are growing rank.

So these traders both got worsted,
As such traders always will,
When the farmer leaves his farming,
And the miller leaves his mill.
And the mill lies there in ruins,
On the margin of the stream,
And the fields where Walton labored
They are nothing but a dream,
So I leave this lesson with you,
For there's many trading still,—
Trading, trading, many trading,
For a poorhouse o'er the hill.

THE STREAMLET

Murmur on along the valley,
Little streamlet, murmur on,
Graceful flitting in your sally,
Till the gladsome day is gone.

Over rocks and riffles gliding,
As you ever onward pour,
Here in peeping, there in hiding,
'Neath the shelving on the shore.
And, to burnish off some gravel,
Hesitating oft awhile,
Then continuing your travel,
Playful as a little child.
Here you eddy, almost creeping,
Scarcely moving on at all,
Then you're dashing, or you're leaping
O'er some tiny waterfall.
And how I envy all your sweetness,
As you gently onward glide,
First at leisure, then in fleetness,
Past the charming countryside.
Flashing out to glimpse some lover,
Mumbling blessings on his soul,
Then retreating, swift, to cover,
Lest he should thy smile behold.
Past the hamlet and the city,
Growing deeper, growing strong,
Slowly changing from thy ditty,
Into louder, coarser song.
Past the workman, at his labor,
Past the beauty-spots of worth,
Ever helpful as a neighbor,
Barring not the best of earth.
Always pleasant, always singing
Songs of cheerfulness, thou art,
And to others ever bringing,
Gladness to a longing heart.
Circling on, and on for ever,
Down, and downward still you go,
Soon to join some stately river,
And to mingle with its flow.

THE INDIAN AND THE BUFFALO

And are these all that's left of thee,
These fragments of antiquity,
This wily bull, that breathes his last,
Symbolic of an age that's past,
And he who stoops o'er thee alone,
Past monarch of an ancient throne,—
This savage here, who seems to see
The storm that has o'erwhelméd thee.
And does he smile at thy last breath,
That ends thy wild career in death?
Nay, nay, indeed; no smile is there,
For in this picture he must share
This selfsame fate, some afterwhile,
That robs him of the faintest smile,
And throws a frown across his brow,
And holds him dumb, and speechless now.

And from these plains, far stretching on,
These two companions now are gone
From every hill and every shore
That knew them once, but nevermore
Shall hear again their mighty tread;
For all of these long since have fled
The beauty-spots of plain and crest,
Wide sprinkled o'er the boundless West.
And where the torrent wears its cleft,
Some bleaching bones alone are left,
Through all the stretches of our land,
And far beyond the Rio Grande;
And eastward yet, along the shore,
Where the Atlantic's doleful roar

Sounds like a dirge, when storms arise,
And chant their requiem to the skies.

And so they're gone, these tribes of yore,
From every mountain, stream, and shore.
This savage, with his tattered tent,
That claimed this wealthy continent.
And where it dwelt,—this savage race,—
Another's come to take its place.
And why this change, this wondrous change?
To wild crude men it seemeth strange.
But in our own discerning mind,
We see a providence that's kind.

And is it best that we are here,
To break and till, and reap the mere,
For other ones, whose sterile ground,
In regions vast, are strewn around?
Let's think of these, all these that's gone,
As like the night before the dawn.
Consoled by all this mighty host,
Extending now, from coast to coast.
A thousand now, where once before,
But one was found, from shore to shore.
And these improvements, all so grand,
Far strewn around on every hand,
And where were they, had we not come,
To plan and build for home sweet home?

True, some isolated wigwams stood
Along the stream, or by the wood,
And here they'd stay till game was gone,
And then the band went moving on.
While all around these riches lay,
With ne'er a thought of husbandry.

For this wild savage with his frown
Was all too proud to till the ground.
And then the Lord came by one day,
And vowed he'd drive these men away,
And give the land to one more wise,—
Some one with pluck and enterprise,
To turn the sod, and sow the plain,
That He had meant for fruits and grain.

"And now," said He, "I warn you all,
Your ways are not my ways at all,
And if you don't arouse from sleep,
Between these oceans, wide and deep,
I'll have to treat you as I've done
In all the lands beneath the sun.
Selecting but the tried and best,
And drive all others farther West."
And ere He went upon His way,
He warned them He'd return some day,
To see if they had changed their plan,
And sought to cultivate the land.
But while the years they came and went,
These savages, they seemed content
To sally forth and bend the bow,
To slay the wily buffalo.

And yet, these men of sluggish brains,
Who moved about upon the plains,
Refused to heed the words of God,
Who bade them go and turn the sod.
And then it was, Columbus come,—
And probably passed around some rum,
And lured these natives to his ship,
And then he loosed the anchor's grip,
And sailed he eastward o'er the main,

Until he reached the coast of Spain.
And there, before his sovereigns told
The story that will ne'er grow old.

But that was in a slothful age.
Long years before this modern rage
Of steam, and gas, and whisperings,
Or man had thought of flying wings.
And yet, the Lord once more returned,
And found these natives unconcerned.
For while two hundred years went by,
This roving race made no reply.
Nor was there found a field of grain,
On all this vast extending plain.
Nor cities built, nor compact formed,
To meet invasion's threatening storm,
For still these native hunters thought
The Lord would leave what he had wrought,—
For savages, and idle hands,—
The wealth of all these endless lands.

And so he sang his wild songs still,
And lived the life a savage will,
Who dreameth not of God's one plan,
That still exalts our fellow-man.
Yes, the years went by,—two hundred now,—
Nor was there found a single plow,
To break the sod and stir the soil,
Nor e'en a man who sought its toil.
And now, the Lord was wroth, and said:
"The world cries out for other bread."
And then He sent the *Mayflower* o'er,
To plant some seeds along the shore,
And chop, and hew, and clear the wood,
Along the stream where Plymouth stood.

And North they spread to Canada,
And down the coast to Florida;
And while the ax and rifle rang,
And onward swift the builders sprang,
More deeply yet toward the West
These poor deluded natives pressed.
For other ships behind this trailed,
And o'er the wide Atlantic sailed,
And landings made along the shore,
And built where none had built before.
And cities sprang on every side;
And commerce swept the oceans wide;
And bread was sent to every shore,
Around the earth to feed the poor.

And then the Lord was heard to say:
"I hail thee oft, America!"
And there He stood, and smiled, and smiled,
And said He loved His youngest child.
"And press," said He, "press boldly on;
For scarce your day has seen its dawn.
And of this race, that's gone before,
No enmity to them I bore,
But none shall occupy my land,
Unless I find they still expand.
And love your soil, and keep it new,
If not, in time, I'll damn you, too.
For here's the gem of greatest worth,
These vales that fructify the earth!"

Then come, my friends, let's take a hand
In all the glories of our land,
And show our God we're worthy men,
And mean to be until the end.
And then I'm sure, He'll laugh out loud,

And say, because He feels so proud:
"Behold in these,—these broader minds,
Here's where the vine of progress twines,
These Lincolns, and these Jeffersons,
And these immortal Washingtons,
And all the rest that helped to lay
The keel that floats America."

JIM JOHNSON AND HIS WIFE

Jim Johnson, he got up one morn,
And Jim walked down to town,
And when he'd reached the business part,
He walked and walked around;
Until, at last, along the way
He found a big saloon,
Then Jim walked in and called for grog,
And there he drank till noon.
And danced his jigs, and sang his songs,
And had a world of fun,
Until he whispered o'er the bar:
"I've not a cent of mun."
And then it was, they threw him out,
Upon the stony street,
And blacked his eyes, and broke his nose,
And kicked him with their feet.
But Jim, he made so loud a noise,
While yet they held him down,
The cops come running through the streets,
From all the dives in town.
And then they took him off to jail,—
Behind some prison bars,—
And Jim looked like a slaughter house,
A-bleeding from his scars.

And yet, next day they lined him up,
Along with forty more,
And every man along the line
Was evidently poor.
And Jim, they give him thirty days,
And made him pay a fine,
And sent him off a-pounding rock,
To pacify his mind.
And when he got that straightened up,
He went and drank some more,
For Jim, you see, had done this thing
A hundred times before.

And then his wife, she come to town,
With twins upon her arm,
And she said: "Jim was always good
When he was on the farm.
He'd milk the cows, and churn the cream,
And hoe the cabbage patch,
And as for generosity,
You couldn't find his match.
And we are farmers, Jim and I,
And lead a farmer's life,
And there we're held in high respect,
As 'Johnson and his wife.'
And while we live among our friends
Along the shady lane,
Some strangers oft come in to sup,
And shelter from the rain.
And Jim, you see, won't charge a cent,
No matter who may come,
And oft he's said they ought to do
The same with beer and rum.
Instead, they've gone and beat him up,
And took him off to jail,

And coming into town this morn,
I found his bloody trail.
And then I sought the magistrate,
The mayor of the town;
But when he saw my tearful face,
He met me with a frown.
And when I spoke about our home
Along the shady lane,
At me he smiled derisively,
And said to call again.
And while I plead the best I could,
With this, my sobbing tone,
As like a flash he turned away
And left me there alone.
God help these babies that we've got,
These twins upon my arm,
If this keeps on much longer now
We're bound to lose our farm."

And you, my friends, take my advice:
When you go down to town,
And when you reach the business part,
And walk and walk around,
Don't go and do as Jimmy did,—
Don't hunt the big saloon,
And walk right in and order grog,
And drink and drink till noon;
And dance your jigs, and sing your songs
And whisper o'er the bar;
For if you do you'll soon find out
The gates are not ajar.
"And what became of her," you ask,
"With twins upon her arm?
And was her prophecy correct,
About their little farm?"

And shame, as well, the state,
And shame our cities, great and small,
Providing such a fate.
For Jim's been gone these many years,
But other Jims, alas,
Have come to take Jim Johnson's place,
Asleep beneath the grass.
And while they lost their little home
Along the shady lane,
Where travelers, aweary, sought
A shelter from the rain,
More poignant yet than all of this
Is that eternal blight
That comes to haunt a ruined life,
And make it dark as night.

THE DEATH OF JOHN BARLEYCORN

It's up to you, John Barleycorn,
It is, as sure as you are born!
And so we've come, your grace to warn,
And break your demijohn.
And go and lock your brewery up,
And smash your kegs, and every cup,
For ne'er again we'll drink a sup,
Of poison o'er your counter.
And, John, this thing has come to stay,
As sure as light brings on the day,
Or men grow feeble, old, and gray,
Along the passing years.
And for your plight, John Barleycorn,
All broken-hearted and forlorn,
The world has naught but endless scorn
For those who seek her ruin.

But, John, know this, you're only one
That's cursed our race since we begun,
And played their pranks, and had their fun,
Before they slept forever.
But I'll not mention these to you,—
Although the list is long and true,—
For you'll have all that you can do
To make an honest living.
Nor am I sorry for you, John,
As like to those you preyed upon,
For you were such a heartless don,
A-grasping after money.
And, John, you scoffed at mothers' tears,
And had for them but passing sneers,
And mocked all decency for years,
And made your god your whiskey.
And for all this, I'll say to thee:
When thou art gone, thy grave shall be
As lost as though you slept at sea,
Beneath the briny ocean.
And none shall come to shed a tear,
Above thy mold that slumbers here,
Nor speak thy name, unless to sneer,
Thy heartless avocation.
And glad's the day, John Barleycorn,
And glad's the eve, and glad's the morn,
When men can't find a single horn
In all the blessed city.

GOD'S COUNTRY

I saw the grandest picture once
That man has ever seen,
With high encircling mountain chains,
And valleys spread between;

And round and round its dizzy heights,
The bridle-path and road,
And in its gorges deep below,
A seething torrent flowed.
And far and near the country flung
Her wide extending arms,
And everywhere the vistas lent
Their most exquisite charms.
And justice smiled upon them all,
While pointing to her plan,
Where equal weal and equal woes
The heritage of man.

Who wrought this picture? do you ask.
Who spread this lovely scene,—
With forest deep and rivers flow,
And valleys rolled between?
Why, He it was, who made my heart,
As well this flashing eye,
And while all this you may behold
How futile seems reply.
And here the needs of happiness
Are thickly strewn around,
For God lives in the country wide;
The devil lives in town.

I'll tell you how I found this out,
Some forty years ago:
One day, when I went fishing trout,
Along with Kitty Snow;
And while we sat upon a log
That lay across the brook,
We watched the travel on the road
Behind a shady nook.
"And with this travel here," said I,
"The fish will never bite."

And yet we stayed and stayed till I
  Was mad enough to fight.
But I was so wrapt up in her
  I didn't dare to pout,
And this was once she tangled me,
  And turned me square about.
And all was done so nicely, too,
  And in a proper way,
And when the fogs had passed along,
  I scarce knew what to say.
And smiling now, my sweetheart said,
  "Let's weigh this travel out;
Let's take our pads and write it down
  And find what they're about.
I've heard old Nick lives down in town,
  The Lord, among the woods,
Let's find what each of these produce:
  The traffic, and the goods."
And unto this I gave assent,
  With scarce a moment's thought,
But presently I saw the point,
  And found that I was caught.
For Kit, she chose the rural route,
  And I, the blasted town,

And there she sat the livelong day
  And wrote the products down.
And oft I heard her tittering,—
  For she was feeling fine,—
While I, like Job, I stood and held
  This vacant pad of mine.
Of course she was a country lass,
  And I was reared in town,
And when I saw what she had done
  She made me take a frown.

For while the hours dragged along,
I scarcely wrote a bit,
And yet my lady wrote so much
I thought she'd never quit.
And, true it was, I'd known her long,
And she was always sweet,
But now, to-day, she seemed awry,
In taking my defeat.

And so the morning hours went
Without a single trout,
And there I sat, like some old man,
Afflicted with the gout.
And then I spoke of luncheon time,
The middle of the day,
But still she smiled the sweetest smile,
And swiftly wrote away.
And here I left her all alone
And sought our swinging boat,
And yet, she scarcely looked around,
The while she wrote and wrote.

The day passed on, the evening came,
The sun was sinking low,
And gruffly now I raised my voice,
And told her we must go.
At this she quickly turned around,
And left our shady nook,
And like an elfin tripped
The margin of the brook.
And while I pushed our boat away
My lady sat behind,
And sang a ditty soft and low,
To pacify my mind.
And then she opened out her pad
And read to me a part,

And such an endless mass she had,
It made my temper smart.
And while the waters roared aloud,—
As waters often will,—
Above all this her voice arose
As though the bay were still.

And while she read and smiled at me,—
At last I broke an oar,
And backward in the boat I went,
Far madder than before.
And while I slowly paddled on,
My lassie ever read,
And this is only just a part
Of what my lover said:

"I saw some brilliant buds expand
Into a perfect bloom,
And maidens came and gathered these,
To decorate their room.
And then the vans began to pass
A-rumble down the road,
Beside a meadow doodled nice,
Some farmers lately mowed.
I read the labels as they went,
Of honey, milk, and cream,
And many of the loads I saw
Would stall the strongest team.
And then there passed along the way
A herd of fattened kine,
And slowly trudging at their heels,
A hundred head of swine.
And sheep and lambs in flocks so vast
I'm sure I could not tell,
Led on and on along the road,
Behind a tinkling bell.

And every kind of fowl I saw,—
Like turkeys, geese, and ducks,—
And these were piled in crates so high
They loaded down the trucks.
And wheat and corn and barley bags,
Potatoes, oats, and hay,
Like clouds they were that overcast
The universal way.

"And bales of wool and timber trains,
And timothy and flax,
And loads of cotton from the South,
And horses, mules, and jacks.
And grapes, I saw, with oranges,
And baskets full of plums,
All products of the country frank
From which our living comes.
And cantaloupes and turnips rolled
Along the dusty way,
And pickles vied with onions oft
Throughout the busy day.
And cheese and eggs, and butter, too,
Along with hides and wax,
And hubbard squash, with hazelnuts
To fill the smaller cracks.
And oft I saw the terrapin,
The salmon, and the eel,
As well as cod and mackerel
That makes a splendid meal.
And coffee, tea and chocolate,
And peppermint, and salt,
And beer, that's made from barley mash,
That ferments into malt.
And peas and beans and radishes,
And lettuce on the side,

As constantly they moved along
As does the ocean tide.
And snipes there were, and pheasant, too,
The plover, and the quail,
And wagon- after wagonload
Of bonny cottontail.
And hick'ry wood, all dry and nice,
For wealthy folk to burn,
And yams, I saw, I do believe,
As big as granny's churn.

"And by me passed some loads of bones
To fertilize the lands,
And pretty Polly oft I heard
Among the moving vans.
And 'possum for the colored race
And sugar from the tree,
And cat and bass and pike there was
That I could plainly see.
And lemons for the lemonade,
And cherries for the pie,
And broilers from the poultry-yards,
To make a Sunday fry.
And turtles, from the swampy lands,
The curlew, and the frog,
And cranberries and rice as well
That hanker for the bog.
And cider, from the cidermill,
And melons from the vine,
And from the vineyard o'er the hill
A dozen casks of wine.
And all around us everywhere
The fields were turning brown,
For God lives in the country sweet;
The devil lives in town;

And don't you get impatient, dear,
For I am almost through,
And yet I think I'd better read
Another line or two.
And then I'll listen with delight
To many things you wrote,
For I can manage this, you know,
Or any other boat.
And when we reach my father's farm,
Some distance down the bay,
We'll tell them of our fishing trip
And how we spent the day.

"And coal there was in quantities,
And gold and silver ore,
And other things went dashing by
I never saw before;
And lime that looked as white as snow,
That's burned in many kilns,
In countries vast,—that's strewn around
Among the distant hills.
And sand and gravel moved along
In never-ending strings,
And water from the waterworks
Around the mineral springs.
And jugs and jars of pottery,
That's made from Potter's clay.
A host of these went moving on,
And on, along the way.
And copper, from the copper mines,
And lead and iron ore,
The barges on the river near,
A mighty tonnage bore.
And oils,—from the oil fields,—
That's shipped away in tanks,

And brick went by continually,
That's made along the banks;
And from the quarries near at hand,
Some onyx-mottled rocks,
And marble that is used to build
Our finest city blocks;
And granite, for our monuments,
And cars of Bedford lime,
And cobble-stones for making roads,—
That's useful all the time;
And alum, that is hidden down
Among its mother earth,
And crayons made from common chalk
Possessing much of worth;

"And quite a bit of asbestos,
Aluminum and tin,
And glass, that's cut to make it glint,
And some of which they spin.
And, oh, the wonders that I saw
From creeping plant and tree,
From all the countries of the world
And river, lake, and sea!
And everything the heart could wish
To beautify the home,
And wean the mind from worry's way
And banish all its gloam.
The earth gave up the best she had,
From every vale and hill;
And at my feet a song I heard,—
The waters of the rill."

"Excuse me, Kit, I thought you said
'Another line or two,'
And then you'd lay your pad aside
And do as others do."

"I did, and yet I think it best
I finish out my note;
So lay your paddle down awhile
And let the dory float.
And prunes, oh, yes; I most forgot
The luscious little prune,
And rhubarb, too; well, I declare,—
For making sauce in June.
And mustard, from the mustard plant,
And raisins from the vine,
And starch to make the linen stiff
That hangs upon the line.
And ice there was, that went along
For storage near the bay,
Where men go out and often cut
A thousand tons a day.

"And corn I saw, the brush that's used
To make the lady's broom,
And tiger pelts of every kind
To decorate her room.
And then I saw some venison
Upon a noble stag,
And elk and bear and other game
Behind a weary nag.
And hemp there was, and sisal grass
That's used in making rope;
And offal from the slaughter house
To manufacture soap.
And green bananas,—such a load
They weighed the steamer down!—
Along with cocoanuts, of course,—
The largest nut in town.
And rubber, from the rubber trees
To make the rubber tire

That hums along the way so fast
It sets the roads afire.
And willows, from the willow with,
To weave the willow ware,
And bristles from the coarser swine
As well as plaster hair.
And dates and figs and cinnamon
I saw with common sage,
And other things I failed to catch
In this elusive age.
And oft I saw the hickorynut,
The walnut, and the beech,
For boys who had gathered them
A wagonload of each.

"And then tomatoes, ripe and red,
And sorghum, if you will,
And flour from the miller's chest
That runs the watermill.
And barrels full of sassafras,
And ginger for the cake,
And tallow candles that are used
At every Irish wake.
And ginseng from the shady vales,
And wahoo from the soil,
And aromatic packages
Of pungent pennyroy'l.
And close behind some rosin come,
For rosining the bow,
And that was why I danced a jig,
As when you asked to know."

But when our boat had ground at last
The gravel on the shore,
She threw her writings overboard,
And vowed she'd read no more.

And then she took me by the arm,
And, like a mother, said,—
A pickle now in either hand,
And not a bite of bread,—
"I want to tell you something, Frank,
There's nothing grows in town,
Except the bloom of poverty,
That wears a ragged gown;
And blasted hopes and suicides,
And murders every night,
And robbers, who will only work
To keep their pistols bright.
And pestilence and drunkenness,
And villainy and greed,
And fiends of every known degree
That infamy can breed.

"Give me the pleasures born of hope,
The greening of the fields,
And singing birds and stately woods,
And pure and simple meals,
The pliant sod to tread upon,
The golden sun its crown,
For God lives in the country, dear,
But never lives in town.
I see Him in the sparkling dews,
Resplendent in the morn,
And meet Him daily, face to face,
In every leaf that's born.
In tones of tinkling melody
I find Him in the brook,
And often turn myself around
In wonderment to look.
And for my lagging faith He sends
The whisper of the trees,

And comes to cool my parching brow
In every passing breeze.
And when the day begins to break,
And clouds begin to blush,
The morning finds me swept away
With Nature's blessed hush;
The evening folds me in her arms,
So hallowéd and calm,
My heart throbs out its gratitude,
So full of thanks I am!
And like some prophecy of old,
I hear this true command,
Outspoken from a thousand things
Around on every hand:

" 'These bounties, that around you lie,
All these I freely give,
The Lord cries out to every one:
"Come unto Me and live!
Out here among my harvest fields,
A-billow with their grain,
Where softly floats the gentle breeze
Across the verdant plain!" ' "

THE PARTING

Will you cherish me, my dearest,
Will you idolize my name,
Above the plaudits' loudest sweep,
Around the brow of fame?
Will you wait, and long, and linger
For my coming through the years,
And will you call my name and listen
As you hesitate in tears?

And will you plant for me a flower,
  Like the one that's in my room,
And come out and break the silence
  That must linger round my tomb,
And sing for me, my favorite song,
  In the evening of the day,
Come and hold a sweet communion,
  Ere I molder into clay?

And when your labors are all finished,
  And you're kneeling by your chair,
Will you mention me, my dearest,—
  Will you mention me in prayer?
And will you teach our baby daughter,
  When you fold her to your breast,
There is light beyond the darkness,
  And the master knoweth best?

And give her all my little trinkets,
  And my picture on the wall,
And brush away her tears of sorrow,
  That are waiting for us all?
Aye, your answer, that's been given,
  Given all along the years,
In your actions that were stronger
  Than your language, or your tears.

And it's finished. While I'm waiting
  Death comes stealing through my gate,
In this hour of my departure,
  He has lingered until late.
There's my baby, I have kissed her,—
  Kissed you all a last good-by.
In the arms of my Creator,
  What a pleasure thus to lie!

WAITING

And, oh, for the sound of a voice that's still,
  And the gladsome smile of a beaming face,—
As I ramble alone by the *tockling* rill,
  Where memories fondly enfold the place!

And, oh, for the touch of a hand that lies,
  Forever encircling a pulseless breast,
And a prattling tongue and the flashing eyes
  That are wrapt in the folds of eternal rest!

For I am alone and depressed, my dear,
  And I longingly look to the rounding hill,
And upon your tomb I'm leaving a tear,
  That will bind us both in the future still.

And wait for me, love, by that pearly gate,
  For my step is slow, and my form is bent;
And the day is gone and the eve is late,
  While biding my time ere I go—content!

DESTINY

Where destiny has made her home
  For ages in the past,
The seekers after truth have found
  Her hiding-place at last.

And if its fields of mental worth,
  Why, then, we feed the brain;
And if some prowess wonderful,
  The physical we train.

By specializing thus, we know,
All prodigies unfold,
And looking o'er the page of time,
The story's easy told.

And while the tinker ever seeks
To grasp the whole domain,—
All scattered thus, his energies
Are very quickly slain.

Then study well the lives of men,
And note how they proceed;
One object always in their mind,
Alone they ever heed.

In love or war, it matters not,
One constant thought pursue;
And Destiny, e'en Destiny,
Will step aside for you.

Behold the thought Columbus had
Before that mighty dawn,
And what was that, they say he said?
"Sail on, my men, sail on!"

And Grant, upon his battle-fields,
When doubters asked him, "Why?"
Amid the storms of shot and shell
He had but one reply.

The bogies of the world have been
The destiny of man.
It's undermined his energies,
And ruined every plan.

THE FAIRY NUMBER ONE

One evening in my garden, late,
I heard some fairy say:
"But recently, as when our God
Had gone so far away,—
To reconstruct again, perchance,
The ruins of some sun
That, out amid the fogs of time,
Had met another one.
And while the grandest music still
Arose and died away,
And pleasures one can ne'er forget
Beguiled the passing day;
At two I left the holy place,—
When nodding heads recline
From viands that are often rich
And draughts of sparkling wine.
Unseen by all that joyous throng,
I scaled its dazzling height,
To cleave the outer depths of space
And dare the darksome night.
How many million leagues I came
To me is all unknown,
As, like the instant flash of thought,
I hurried on alone;
Past suns, and moons, and asteroids,
And Jupiter, and Mars,
And past a never-ending flood
Of great and brilliant stars
And systems reaching out in space,
Where grandeur ever blends
With power, symmetry and grace,
And wonder never ends.

And here and there, as time went on,
I stopped, to fast and pray,
And, oh, the sights that I have seen
Since God has gone away!

"Here, on this planet, as I lay
Lone resting by a stream,
I saw two feeble women yoked
And driven as a team.
And men still held the reins behind,
With bloody whips at play,
At sight of which, with bleeding heart,
I turned my face away.
And as they jolted o'er the roads,
I followed close behind,
By ruins old now covered o'er
With ivy's clinging vine,
And what was once a fruitful plain,
Now tangled in decay,
Where mighty pillars, heaped and blent,
In desolation lay.
Long hours we spent upon the road,
Among the sandy cones,
Near jackal dens and howling wolves
And heaps of human bones.
And turning round a ledge of rocks
That long before us lay,
I saw a dozen squalid huts
Some distance down the way;
And in their midst a chapel stood,
With 'dobe walls of brown,
And poverty was everywhere
In every face and gown.
And he who used the whip before,
With saintly face and fair,

Bowed down, and in a solemn tone
Commenced his Sunday prayer:

"'Be this our supplication, Lord,—
It's ever unto Thee,—
Since thou hast called us forth
Upon life's stormy sea,
For a few brief years to strive
Among the sons of men,
And then in death, with Thy command,
Thou call'st us back again.
For a time,—as 'twere, a day,—
We pluck Thy flowers and rave,
And turning, hide our face in grief,
And lay them on the grave.

"'Prime Mover of the Universe,
And Love, and Boundless Grace,
May we not hope some future day
To meet Thee face to face?
An humble and a contrite child,
At last, before Thee stand,
And feel the glowing touch, dear Lord,
Of Thine extended hand.
O God, we long and long for Thee,
Deep hidden amid Thy stars!
Come forth, and flood the world with light,
And fling aside Thy bars.
For dark and drear and lonely are
Our pathways down the years,
With Thee, our dearest friend, far off,
Beyond this vale of tears.
And bless us all collectively,
And these, Thy favored ones,
And grant a special blessing, Lord,
To all Thy holy sons.

And now, O Lord, God Almighty,
Grant the boon of our lives:
Wilt thou not come and speak again
To these, our erring wives;
Who still, we find, from pole to pole,—
Embracing every land,—
Are seeking, even now, dear Lord,
To controvert Thy plan?'
And then, with boundless fervency,
While all the heads were bowed,
And men were shouting everywhere
'Amens!' among the crowd,
I tipped a Bible, deep in dust,
Upon a shelf so high;
It sounded like a pistol shot,
As on the floor it lie:
And while a circle formed around
This wonder on the floor,
In deep disgust, I walked out through
The keyhole in the door.

"And now, beyond this misery
My route of travel lay,
And soon I sighted in the east
A bright and sparkling bay;
And drawing near, behold, I saw
A cloud of fire and smoke,
And soon upon my startled gaze
A line of battle broke.
And mighty shot, like rainbow hues,
Went arching from the bay,
And myriads answered from the land,
And went the other way.
And oft the bugle called the charge,
And oft it called retreat,

And thousands o'er the bloody fields
Lay dying at my feet.
And from the city, sorely pressed,
An endless pageant poured,
From conflagrations everywhere,
More deadly than the sword.
And now, from all this deadly strife
And butchery and flame,
I turned me round about at last,
With sorrow mixed with shame.

"And once again I sought relief
Long weary miles away,
Among the highest mountain peaks
Alone, to fast and pray.
For all this grief and wickedness,
And all this shameful sin,
Will be rebuked and cast away
When God comes home again.
But ere I reached my fasting-place
That I had swiftly sought,
I found another field of blood
That enmity had wrought.
Where little children cried for bread,
And starving cantons lay,
I heard the bugle sound again
In battle's stern array.

"And here and there and everywhere,
I failed in all my plans,
For wreck and ruin followed me
Through many fertile lands,
For still I saw the smoke by day,
And fires gleamed by night,
And thunders shook the distant bay
With dæmonlike delight;

And war's alarm filled all the earth,
  And none were left to pray,
And life was burdened unto death
  Since God had gone away.
Alas! I fear another storm
  Is hidden in the gloam,
As in the days of Cataline,
  Or Nero, down in Rome;
For then, we know, enormous strength
  Was centered in the few,
And looking at one nation now,
  We find the same is true,
And conquest was the leading thought
  Outlined in every plan,
But not more so, perhaps, than now,
  With one designing man.
And history shows the strongest minds
  And boldest nations won,
In leading on to victory
  Across some Rubicon.
But now, alas!—alas, for this,
  For they themselves had lost,
And they, and all the earth beside,
  Were doomed to pay the cost.
For soon the night of darkness spread
  Her pinions o'er the world,
And backward, with a frightful crash,
  Advancing thought was hurled;
And nations died, and cities fell,
  And palaces were rent,
And man become a child again
  With feebleness content.

THE SOWER

Behold, a sower went forth to sow,
In the languid breath of the season's glow,
And near to the brink of a river's flow,
That beautiful River of Jordan!

And he sowed a prayer along with his grain,
To stifle the heat of the scorching plain
And the Lord sent down some showers of rain
By the beautiful River of Jordan.

And as for the tares, and the poor stony lands,
And the blight that comes when the chinch expands,
A bountiful crop for the toiler stands
By the beautiful River of Jordan.

And the Savior heard of this righteous man,
Whose piety now was filling the land,
And then his wonderful sermon was planned
Near the beautiful River of Jordan.

Enshrouded in myst'ry, we know not his name,
His nation, his country, or whence that he came;
But Christ leads him on to still greater fame,
By the beautiful River of Jordan.

THE TRUE SOURCE

"I pray," says the brooklet,
"I pray to the ground,"
"And I," says the river,
"To brooks all around.

"And making my journey
Along through the land,
I heave to the wave-crest,
And grow and expand.

"Come, float on my bosom
And jolly with me,
And view the great cities
En route to the sea!"

"And I," says the raindrop,
"I pray to the cloud,
Where storms ever mumble
Their mutterings loud;

"Away then,—away then,
I fly to the earth,
And give to the thirsty
A newness of birth.

"And loudly I patter,
And patter amain,
Till cotters roll over
And slumber again."

"Ah, ha!" says the grass-blade
A-peep from its sod,
"I pray to Jehovah,—
Jehovah's my God."

THE TRAVELING SALESMAN

THERE'S a village on the railway,—where I travel to and fro,
To take the merchant's order for his goods,—

In a wide and fertile valley where the sweetest waters flow,
'Neath the shadows of the overhanging woods.

And when my circuit's finished, and I reach this point again,
I lay aside my worry and my strife,
For I know three smiling faces will be waiting for my train,
In the persons of my babies and my wife.

Unpretentious was this village in the years of long ago,
Unpretentious, is this little village still,
But here I've found the purest lives that mortals ever know,
Surrounded by their holdings that they till.

There's a romance in the country,—in the whisper of its trees,
Like the babble of a language that is old,
And a mystery that surrounds it like the mumble of the bees,
Which the wisdom of the ages hasn't told.

It's the fountain-source of knowledge, it's the pure and wholesome air,
It's the struggle for the summit of the hill;
It's this pleading voice of Nature that is present everywhere,
That soothes the nervous tension of the will.

It's the warble of the songster, it's the waters at the mill,
It's the gliding of the onward-flowing stream.

It's the cradle-song of Mother, and the murmur of the rill
That paint the vivid visions of their dream.

It's the scenes that lie around them, it's the undulating plains,
It's this beauty that is present with its charms;
It's the clouds of silver lining and the purifying rains,
And the matron, with her baby in her arms.

It's the growth of vegetation that so constantly appeals,
It's the turning of the turf beneath the plow,
And the clothing of the landscape and the greening of the fields
That bring a smile of pleasure to the brow.

It's the lowing of the cattle and the whinny of the foal,
It's the crowing of the cock'rel in the morn,
It's this zenith of perfection and the acme of the soul,
Where the famous of the earth are always born.

It's the hazing of the distance, it's the efforts of the eye,
It's the purple tints of morning in the East,
It's the 'doodle in the meadow and the billow of the rye,
And the jollity that's flowing at the feast.

It's the creamy mists of evening, it's a welcome for the birth,
It's the infant that is nursing at the breast:
Here's the cord that binds together all the noble of the earth,
In a pathway leading on to perfect rest.

It's the absence of confusion, it's the quietude of night
That brings refreshing slumber in its wake,
It's the boating on the river and the flying of the kite,
And the skating in the winter on the lake.

It's this cheerful disposition and the freedom from restraint,
In these roomy, rural regions of the West,
And the maiden in her garden,—who is never known to paint,—
That tells the truest story and the best.

It's the distance down the valleys and the objects far away
That give a broader impulse to the mind
Than do choked and narrow cities with their dingy walls of clay,
And the smutty-smelling odors that we find.

It's the greeting of the neighbor, it's the grasping of his hand,
It's the open-hearted gushings on the wold,
Here's the answer for the seeker and the witching of the wand
Adown the passing ages that have told.

It's the purifying waters, it's the bubble of the springs,
It's the solvent that is hidden in the ground,
And the calling, ever calling, of so many blessed things
That caps the final climax with a crown.

In these rural vales of beauty there is room enough for all,
And a heritage for each and every man;
In some wide and fertile valley where the tumbling water's fall,
Creation has prescribed an ample plan.

I've a lovely little cottage in this village by the sea
That is dearer to my heart than is my life,
And the pleasures it affords me, they are sacred unto me,
It's the dwelling of my babies and my wife.

While I labor late and early, and I travel far and wide,
There's a sweetly solemn thought upon my mind,
And my heart is ever throbbing like the ocean's flowing tide,
When all that's dear to me is left behind.

And when my train is stalling in some dark and dreary dell,
Here's a message that has often come to me:
And it's from my wife and babies and it seems to sweetly tell
That all's well in the cottage by the sea.

In the keeping of that cottage and its pure and simple love,
That is shorn of all deceit and hidden art,
All my happiness on earth and my hopes of heaven above,
I've entrusted,—every jewel of my heart.

For I love my dear old homestead and its ocean breezes free,
With a love that is stronger than my life,

And when at last I come to die, I am trusting it will be
In the arms of my babies and my wife.

DISHONOR

Dishonors cast abroad,
Are but a painless pang,
But when they reach the home,
So frightful is their stab
That many swing the blow
That malice would inflict.

BURNS' STATUE

City Park, Denver

Before thee, Burns, I sit me down,
To gaze awhile upon thy face,
And note how e'en thy simple gown
Thy flowing figure giveth grace.
Surrounded here by all these trees,
Transported, rapt, thou seem'st to stand,
As though this scene thy vision sees
Were like thy own, thy native land.
If not, why gaze on all who pass,
Unswerving, still, thy constant eye?
Or is it she,—more dear, alas!—
Is Highland Mary passing by?
Or dost thou see the "Bonnie Doone,"
Wild rambling onward in its flow,
And hear the songster's merry tune,
As in thy life, long years ago?

Or does the Afton onward glide,
With memories of other days,
And stir thy soul with Scottish pride,
Wild bursting forth among thy lays?
And with this book that's open part,
And with thy ever-ready quill,
Come, Burns, of what is in thy heart,
And art thou ever writing still?
Instead some mouse with ruined nest,
If thou hadst only lived to-day,
Thy thought had been with the oppressed,—
The marsh'ling hosts along the way.
But let thy peaceful image stand,—
E'en though the present be ignored?—
All statuelike, serene, and grand,
Among the scenes thy life adored.

THE PROPOSAL

T'was evening, and the stars were bright,
And eastward, far, the moon arose;
As hallowed as some gladsome night,
When lovers meet around the rose.

And like to this, one pressed his suit,—
A noble youth, supremely grand,—
And yet the lady cold and mute,
Disdainful still, withdrew her hand.

Still he did urge, as strength will do,
And plied his wits her love to win,
For he'd a heart as bold and true
As ever beat a breast within.

For now, thought he, the time has come,
When I should know the truth at last,
And if the eve be cold and glum,
I'll brace myself against the blast.

So, there, beneath the vault above,
A-tremble, with his passion mad,
Beneath her feet he cast his love
And every hope in life he had.

And while they near the flowers stood,
Now face to face,—themselves alone,—
Outlined against the somber wood,
Like statues cut from living stone.

The lady turned, with flashing eyes,
And emphasized them with her hands,
And straightway thus, she made replies,
As sternly as they were commands:

"Some hills there are we cannot climb,
So rugged lies their weary height,
And long since now, I once found mine,
And you'll find yours this very night.

"And like ourselves, each one may find,
Their dream of love all torn apart,
To leave its impress on the mind,
And feebler make the pulsing heart.

"Through all of life that's short or long,
And day and night, and storm and sun,
This love may still return and throng
Around us each and every one.

"Then let us part as best we may,
And rue the hour in which we met,
And here's my hand, and let us pray
In years to come we may forget.

"Forget these moonlit evenings here
That, oh! so swiftly seemed to roll,
When your departure, drawing near,
Drew forth the gushings of my soul.

"Or with the sky o'ercast above,
And all around as drear and dark,
How sang I still my songs of love,
As gladsome as the merry lark.

"But now, out through some window pane,
I'll muse me oft, in my distress,
Nerveracked amid this tangled skein,
How long, my God, I cannot guess.

"While you may seek in distant lands
Diversion from this tragic scene,
And press, perchance, another's hands,
This broken heart of yours to wean."

"Forget these arms that clung to me,
And all these tears that flowed with mine!
Ah, tell me, dear, how may this be?
The very thought seems so unkind!"

And she loved him, and he loved her
As with a love none can forget—
And they got married,—dear, oh, dear!—
Nor have they rued the hour yet.

THE SHIPS, THEY ALL GO DOWN

A CHILD there was who played upon
The smoothly shaven lawn,
And in his play he stopped to ask
For one forever gone,
"Oh, Mother dear, pray tell me true,"
Said little Johnny Brown,
"Pray tell me where the ships all go!"
"The ships, they all go down, my child,
The ships, they all go down."

"And passengers and merchantmen,
That sail about the seas,—
Oh, Mother, what of these, pray tell,
And, mother, what of these?"
And then his Mother spoke again,
To little Johnny Brown,
"Among the crash of battle loud
The ships, they all go down, my child,
The ships, they all go down."

"And, Mother, may I ask once more,
When death is drawing nigh
Do little children crowd around
Upon the decks and cry?"
"In war, my dear, there is no love,
But all is hateful frown,
And even where our children ride,
The ships, they all go down, my child,
The ships, they all go down."

THE DEATH OF THE FLOWERS

I AM dying, says the flower, in the season of the year,
I am dying, like my comrades all around,
And there's no one left to cheer me nor to shed a single tear,
As I sink beneath the surface of the ground,
As I sink beneath the surface of the ground,
As I sink beneath the surface of the ground,
And there's no one left to cheer me nor to shed a single tear,
As I sink beneath the surface of the ground.

But I've left some seeds behind me that will live when I am gone,
When the birdies spread again their joyous wing,
And the storms have all departed, and the vernal season comes,
In the rapture and the glory of the spring,
In the rapture and the glory of the spring,
In the rapture and the glory of the spring,
When the storms have all departed and the vernal season comes,
In the rapture and the glory of the spring.

So I'll live and bloom forever while the cycles pass away,
And I'll beautify the garden and the lawn,
Nor shall I long be resting here, amid this clammy clay,
In the autumn of the season—when I'm gone,
In the autumn of the season—when I'm gone,
In the autumn of the season—when I'm gone,

Nor shall I long be resting here, amid this clammy clay,
In the autumn of the season—when I'm gone.

IN AFTER YEARS

And do you know, ere you've grown old
To shield you from the heat and cold,
It's best you hoard a bunch of gold
For after years.

And should some friend enhance your wit,
And plead with you to garner it,
Go thou straightway and save a bit,
For after years.

Nor will you lose a bit of glee
Or pleasure strewn along life's lea
In practicing economy
For after years.

For in these things of simpleness
That leave behind so much distress,
The whole of them, you'll learn to bless
In after years.

For in this field that many leave,
And later on return to grieve,
The gods of pleasure love to weave,
For after years.

And hear, O Youth: Where'er you roam
Beneath this vault of heaven's dome,
Go forth and plan yourself a home
For after years.

And make of this a castle staid,
With deep and strong foundations laid,
That none may come and thee upbraid
In after years.

And let this thought that seems divine,
Around your heart its tendrils twine,
And sway your soul and point your mind
To after years.

For while this siren sweetly sings,
So swift is time upon his wings,
That, ere you know, you'll feel his stings
In after years.

And some may say when thou art old,
And all thy limbs are dull and cold:
"And, whither now, has fled thy gold
For after years?"

And when thine eyes are all a-blear
And indistinctly sound you hear,
And every shadow brings a fear,
In after years,

And do you think these will return,—
These precious moments that you burn,
If so, some day you'll better learn,—
In after years.

In after years,—it seemeth long
While youth is yet so bright and strong,
But, aye, too soon you'll find you're wrong
In after years.

And these may find you deep in debt,
And worry bring you much regret,

And fain you would the past forget
In after years.

Then, while you sift, watch close the sieve.
The simple life's the life to live,
For this alone can pleasure give
In after years.

The simple drink, the simple food,
The frown for all that's low and rude,
For longer life and sweeter mood
In after years,

And for each thought, and for each deed,
Let "Honor!" be thy sacred creed,
That in the end no hearts may bleed
In after years.

And, like the child that lies asleep,
Thy conscience clear forever keep,
And of this sowing thou shalt reap
In after years.

ROCK ME TO SLEEP

Song

There's a rock-me-to-sleep way of leading this life,
In social communion with neighbors and friends,
At home or abroad with our children and wife,
On which every pleasure of all still depends.
Then, rock me to sleep in this cradle of love,
Oh, rock-a-bye, baby, and sing me a song,
And sweet be the tune, like some choir above,
While hastening manhood is dashing along.

Oh, rock me to sleep, oh, rock me to sleep,
Then rock me to sleep in this cradle of love!
And open the music and sing me a song,
For deep in the twilight the long shadows creep,
And night with its darkness comes stealing along.

For fain in this cradle again I would rest,
Away from the sorrows of life's dire alarms,
A-rocking and rocking as though I were pressed
Once more in the clasp of my dear mother's arms;
Then, rock me to sleep in this cradle of love,
Oh, rock-a-bye, baby, and sing me a song,
And soft be the tune like some choir above,
While hastening manhood is dashing along,

Oh, rock me to sleep, oh, rock me to sleep,
Then rock me to sleep in this cradle of love!
And open the music and strike me a chord,
For deep in the twilight the long shadows creep,
As night with its darkness steals over the sward.

Away, like the dewdrop,—away with our youth,
Away with this manhood that's passing away!
Away, like the leaflet, the babe of the wildwood
That lies in the forest in feeble decay!
Then, rock me to sleep in this cradle of death,
Oh, rock-a-bye, baby, and sing me a song,
And sweet be the music and soft as a breath,
While hastening manhood is dashing along;

Oh, rock me to sleep, oh, rock me to sleep,
Then rock me to sleep in this cradle once more,
And turn to the music and sing me a song,
For, Mary, sweet Mary, life's struggles are o'er,
And darker and deeper the shadowings throng.

VENUS

When Venus walked along
The vale that's known as death,
She turned and said to all:
"I pray you come not here
In search of my abode,
For in this loathsome grave
I shall not lay me down
As other ones have done
To mingle with the dust;
For one hath come to me,
And touched my longing heart
With an immortal flame;
And softly hath he said:
'Go thou upon thy way
Through all the lapse of time,
And lay thy witchery
Upon the hearts of men,
That they may imitate
The glory of thy name.'
And so, I pass me on
Beyond, this dreamless sleep,
For it were sad indeed
To leave this beauty here
In moldering decay,
And be forgotten all
By every passing age.
And so I stand aside,
And ceaseless warnings give
To every passerby,
That while some monument
May tower to the skies

In memory of me;
No one shall point with pride
To superscriptions here,
Deep hewn upon the stone,
That on the morrow may
Be drifting fields of sand.
For I shall not be found
Among these ruins thus,
Nor shall I be content
In utter banishment
Within some dungeon dark.
No, this shall never be.
For see, these features mine,
So full of beauty they,
My God hath taken them
And touched the setting sun;
And from this glowing brow
He lifts his brush of fire,
And lo, the rainbow leaps
Across the eastern sky.
And so I warnings give
To each and every one
That I shall not be found
Within this cheerless tomb.
But out among the vales,
Where starry eves invite
The elf-folk of the wood,
Or where the range heaves high
Her undulating crest
Aglow at eventide,
As when the crimson clouds
In grandeur bank themselves
Around the setting sun.
Go there, my friends, go there
And seek for my retreat
Among the landscape wild,

That lieth strewn around
The islands of the earth.
Go there and search for me,
And I shall be at home
In every bud that hangs
In trembling hope around,
And every blade of grass,
And every greening field
May claim me as their own.
For I have thrown aside
This weary load of flesh,
That doth so hedge about
The stumbling feet of all.
Nor shall I seek again
The grosser things of life,
As once I gladly did
In that remembered past,
When I as captives led
The haughty lords of Greece
Around the festal board;
And queened it over all
The mighty men of state,
When Athens ruled the world
In royal pomp and pride.
Yes, the grosser things of life.—
I've left them all behind;
For men have come at last
To meekly bow them down
Before my sacred throne,
And hail me with delight
In every fragrant flower.
And such my God hath said,
For He hath sought me out
And whispered in mine ear:
'Thy beauty shall not fade,
The stars may dim at last,

And earth grow aged and old,
But thou, fair Venus, thou,—
But thou shalt never die!' ''

THE WEDDING RING OF CHARLEY OX

A RING I bought,—a plain gold ring,—
All burnished off so bright,
And of its possibilities
I dreamed me through the night.

For now this ring, this plain gold ring
That I had lately bought,
It seemed to me continually
With endless pleasures fraught.

For every ring,—a wedding ring,
It seems to cast a spell,
O'er every bliss that heaven knows,
And these alone they tell.

And of the darkness on ahead
No mention is there heard,
Of strife and hate and enmity,
There's not a spoken word.

And so the first around me pressed,
These joys born of heaven,
And over all this second state
These pleasures cast their leaven.

And strange, I thought, a thing so small
Could paint a scene like this,
And elevate the mind of man
With such exquisite bliss,

And lead him on, and on, along
  The beauty paths of earth,
And charm him with its ecstasy,
  And fill his heart with mirth!

And there I lay upon my couch
  And mused the night away,
As only one can ever muse
  Before his wedding day.

For in these things I saw that I
  Must leave my home behind,
And Mother's kiss and Father's smile,—
  They rankled in my mind.

And others that I dearly loved,
  Like Bess and Frank and Will,
Entreating long throughout the night,
  They pressed around me still.

And circling on, and ever on,
  Before me passed a scene
Of golden grain and stately wood
  And meadows rolled between.

The fields where I had labored long
  From childhood's early day,
As, like a flash, before my eyes
  They seemed to pass away.

And plain within this circle now,
  Amid the evening gloam,
Among the rest at last I saw
  The passing of my home.

And everything that passed along,
  It seemed to chide me so,

And plead they, each and every one:
"Don't go, my dear, don't go!"

And what a flood of memories
Filled out the passing night,
And nearly all of life they seemed
They brought me such delight.

And e'en the room I called my own,
Its pleadings ever fell,
O'er all my calculations when
I came to say farewell.

And well it might, for in this room
I wrote my first to Jo,
And how I tried, and tried again,—
My hand, it trembled so.

And how, at last I asked myself:
"Am I to leave all this,
And find within a maiden's arms
Such unreservéd bliss.

And then it was this wedding ring
Blazed out a stream of light,
And like some burning meteor
Illumined all the night.

And darted here, and darted there,
And all about my room,
And this so swift, I often failed
To trace it in the gloom.

And sparks it flung along the way,
And mad it seemed to be,
And on its way it loudly hissed,—
And hissed continually.

And when it stopped I saw a frown,
  Then, like some giant tall,
This ring rose up confronting me,
  And towered over all.

"And who art thou, it said aloud,
  That would these scenes adore?"
And passing now, it gruffly bowed,
  And, silent, said no more.

And when all these had gone their way,—
  These horrors of the night,
Near by my couch, in easy reach,
  I saw another light.

And this was, oh! so beautiful
  That I can never tell,
How like a gift from God it came
  And all around me fell.

And, with that smile to gaze upon,
  I roused me from my bed,
And on and on, and ever on,
  We two together fled.

And now the years have flown so fast
  My wife, she says they're seven,
But I don't know, nor do I care,
  Since love is born in heaven.

THE TREES

It's nice to live, and grow, and be
Familiar with each shrub and tree,
And every vale, and every road
That lies around our long abode.

And nice to grow where others grow,
And nice to see and hear and know
The faces that we've known so long,
All wreathed with smiles among the throng.
And sweeter far are all these things,
That long association brings,
Than aught I know of wealth or fame
That fickle fortune may proclaim.
For here the mind seems more at ease
Among these old companion trees,
"And this one here," we tell our friends,—
"And this one here that lowly bends,—
Upon this linden by the road,
As children once we often rode,
And asked the travelers on the ground
How far it was to Grumley Town."
And this was sweet, but age, more dear,
Confronting stands before us here,
And points to every field that's sown,
And every meadow that is mown,
And every place that lies around
The shady groves to Grumley Town,
And every brook, and waterfall,
So dear they are,—I love them all.
And how I pity those who roam
And leave behind their native home,
And hold but lightly all those things
The sacredness of memory brings.
And so it seems that age should be
Familiar with each grove and tree,
And every hill, and every road,
That lies around our long abode,
"And see this tree,"—we point to one
That sheds afar the burning sun,—
"And this one here, 'twas but a sprig,
Long years ago,—about so big!

But see it now; but see its growth,
And aye, my friend, behold us both!''
And while we muse, with eyes that fill,
This scene comes back and haunts us still,
For there's no life that one can live
That can again such pleasures give
As rambling over, in our mind,
Some native grove we left behind.
And if the child these things could see,
Each one would go and plant a tree,
And talk to it, and hug it round,
And think of it as holy ground.
And could they feel what age can feel,
No woodman, with his ax of steel,
Should ever come and chop it down,
To lie and rot upon the ground.
And of you all, where'er you be,
I beg you: Go and plant a tree,
And let its branches widely spread
Above the living and the dead.
A sprig will do,—a tiny sprig,—
For time will make it strong and big,
And bid its life flow on and on,
For ages after you are gone.
So, choose your own, but as for me,
I dearly love the poplar tree.

THE WARNING

Through my window, partly open,
Through my door, wide ajar,
Comes a whisper, comes a token,
Like some spirit from afar,

In the midnight, in its darkness,
In the silence of the hour,
I was startled from my slumber
By a timepiece in the tower,

Gonging out its doleful warning,
With a sadness in its chime,
Gonged the midnight, gonged the morning,
Gonged the swiftly passing time;

Gonged of waitings and of longings
Backward through my open door,
Gonged a footstep, lightly falling,
I shall never hear no more

Gonged my father's old plantation,
And the forest, held so dear,
Gonged the pleasures and temptations
That in youth are always near;

Gonged the seasons swiftly flying,
Gonged the sadness and the mirth,
Gonged the living and the dying
And the deeds of noble worth;

Gonged a host of recollections
Scattered down along the years,
Gonged of home and sweet affections,
Gonged at last a flood of tears.

Things that I had long forgotten,
Gonged out boldly in the night,
Youth and beauty stood before me
Robed in varied garments bright.

Fame and honor and distinction,
Gonged a long and honeyed speech,
Fawned and smiled and stood before me
Just beyond my nervous reach.

In this maze of somber soundings,
Ghostlike in the horrid night,
Came a gong at last that found me
Trembling for the tardy light.

"Stop!" I cried, "my heart is breaking!
Stop the ringing of that bell!"
But its gonging and its quaking
Still within my chamber fell,

Through my window, partly open,
Through my door, wide ajar,
Came that whisper, came that token,
Like some spirit from afar.

In the midnight, in its darkness,
In the silence of the hour,
Some bright angel must have spoken
Through the gonging of the tower.

JOHNNY JOLT

"If I have luck," I heard one say,
I'll be a wealthy man some day."
"And I, if I but keep my health,"
Another said, "I'll gather wealth."
And many more, in whispers soft,
They ever held this "if" aloft,

And spoke of it, as though some charm
Could put a muscle in the arm,
Or give to thought a thing of worth
That lays in tribute all the earth.
And so these "ifs" and "ifs" I found,
As thick as clods upon the ground,
Until one day I met a boy,—
So frank and free, and full of joy
I stopped to talk with him awhile,
And ask about his constant smile.
"And why all this," to him I said;
"It seems you labor for your bread;
And wear old clothes that many shun,
And yet you have a world of fun."
"Well, I don't care for 'ifs,' you see,
I make these 'ifs' look out for me.
As when I make a sudden bolt,
And cry: 'Look out for Johnny Jolt!'
And every 'if,' it clears the track,
And sneaks around behind my back.
Oh, yes; I'm small, and yet I've found,
They know danged well when I'm around.
Some folks, I know, are full of 'ifs,'—
They're like a stream that's full of drif's,
That clog the waters as they go,
And makes them lazy in their flow.
Not me, I labor like I play,
And Pa says I'll get rich some day.
Against small things,—this 'if' and 'if,'
I square myself, and *biff!* and *biff!*
To show the world what pluck can do
That's got the grit to see it through.
And then I'm off, just like some colt,
And so, they call me 'Johnny Jolt.'"

PLEAS PREWETT'S WATCH

My watch is my mentor,
And down through the night,
As snug as a baby
Or wee little sprite,
Impinging, it whispers
And whispers to me
Of things I'd forgotten,—
As plain as can be.

Down under my pillow
This wee, tiny thing,
A-tick and *a-titter,*
Escapement and spring,
Awake, or a-slumber,
By day and by night,
It's telling me ever
Of time's hurried flight.

And oft, when I'm torpid,
It seemeth to say,
"Arouse thee, my master,
And hurry away!
The lark and the linnet
Are out in the sky,
I warn you this minute
To hurry and fly!

"The day is advancing,
The hour is late,
Thy calling demands it,
For others await

Thy coming,—for council
And various things
That life with its duties
Incessantly brings.''

And so, to thee ever,
I fly for relief,
In pleasures abounding,
In sickness and grief,
My faithful companion,
And prompter and guide,
Directing my movements,
Enhancing my pride!

While some may deceive me
And laugh at my plight,
I turn to my timepiece
And find it all right.
And ever, my brother,—
Thou wee, little thing,
A-tick with escapement
A-ting and *a-ting*,

When darkness is fading
And daylight is near,
Down under my pillow
It seems I can hear
A gladness, a warning
Impinging for me
Along in the morning,—
As plain as can be.

''Arouse thee, my master,''
It's saying again,
''For all through the nighttime
You've peacefully lain.

Arouse thee from slumber,
The night's fled away,
Why longer incumber
The beautiful day?''

And then, of a sudden,
It's changing so quick,
Outflinging and ringing
A beautiful tick,
Resounding triumphant
In cadences nice,
Like waters a-trickle
Down under the ice.

But only a moment
Of beautiful things
This jumble and grumble
Of tittering brings.
Resembling a language
In some foreign tongue,
That seemeth to mumble
Down deep in the lung.

Then oft I imagine
It's ranging so far
That earth is forgotten
And space is no bar
To many a wonder
Its musings unfold.
If I could unravel
The story that's told!

And yet, for my business,
Its language is plain,
And so, I consult it
Again and again,

Assured that its promptings
  Will lead me aright,
On all of life's journey,
  By day, and by night.

And oft, when I'm busy,
  At morning and eve,
Its whisperings ever
  Assail me and leave
A host of reminders,
  Laid out for the day,
To village and hamlet
  And friends far away.

As faithful as ever
  This wee, tiny thing,
A-twang with escapement,
  A-twing! and *a-twing!*
Never stopping to slumber,
  With honesty bright,
The moments you number,
  And keep them aright.

But aye, little brother,
  While happy to-day,
I warn you that happiness
  Passes away.
For rogues will assail thee,
  And tear thee apart,
And twist thee, and maim thee,
  With blundering art.
And put thee together,
  As often they do,
O'erlooking some lever,
  Or jewel, or screw;

And cause thee to wabble,
And falter, and say:
"Some thieves have undone me,—
A-twang! and *a-twang!*
Some plundering, blundering
Jeweler gang
That grabbed me, and stabbed me
With many a punch,
And tossed me and lost me
Down under a bunch
Of Ingersoll mouse-traps
They had in a box,
Along with some rubbers
And old dirty socks.

"And since, dear old master,
So keenly I feel
Impending disaster
In mainspring and wheel,
I pray you, excuse me
From service awhile,
For they've so abused me
With chisel and file,
No more can you reckon
On what I may say,
Or heed when I beckon
Along by the way."

And while I may seek thee,
I'll seek thee in vain,
Down under my pillow,—
My watch and my chain;
And many a titter
Of suddenness quick,
Outflinging and ringing
A beautiful tick,

And bounding triumphant
  In ecstasy oft,
When sweet admonitions,
  In whisperings soft,
Have turned me from folly
  And vanity's flight,
To deeds of humanity,
  Mercy, and right.

An aid to my promptness,
  A guide to my feet
In youth's early rompings
  Of bitter and sweet.
When passions are strongest,
  And urgent and keen,
And time seems the longest
  Betwixt and between
The morning and evening
  And close of the day,
When homeward the toilers
  Are wending their way.

When business is over
  And houses all close,
And minds are relaxing
  For rest and repose,
How often thy promptings,
  That I've overlooked,
Has caused me to mutter
  For something unbooked:
Some item forgotten
  As time fled away
In planning and plotting,
  Along through the day.

And then I shall miss you,
  As soon as you're gone,—
At morning and evening,
  And bedtime and dawn,
For, dear little comrade,
  Companion and friend,
This heart that is beating,
  Some time it will end,
And this smiling facelet,
  So beaming to-day,
Like all that is mortal,
  Will soon pass away.
And these little hands
  That go round and round,
And this tiny spring,
  That so bounds and bounds
And lever and casement,
  And jewel and chain,
And shafting and crystal,
  And all of this train
Will cease, and for ever,—
  As if you had breath,—
And join with our vanguard
  That's marching to death
Across the great desert
  Of matter and rust
Composing our ocean,—
  An ocean of dust.

THE SQUIRRELS IN THE FOREST

PROLOGUE

When God had formed the universe, with care He planned
The many startling wonders that's found in every land.
The glacial void He made, and towering summits pale,
Too steep and rugged far for mortal foot to scale;
And yet, that wide expanse upon the pathless deep,
Where still the tireless tides forever onward sweep.
As well, the new-born life he made, and hopeful smile, and glee,
And growth, and progress all upon the land and sea.
And on each blade of grass, and each and all His works,
A Master's hand we see before us ever lurks.
And to the rose He gave the crimson of its hue,
And sowed the distant worlds within a field of blue.
And while this subtle search goes on in every land,
Forever, on and on His endless fields expand.
So dim this mystery, as when the sun was young,
Before the pall of death around the moon was flung,—
As when her rivers dashed, and every flowery dell
Still swarmed life in that long ago.—Who can tell?
Alas, for me and mine! Too deep for mortal ken,
Too wild, the precipice to climb, too dark the dismal glen.

After untold measures
Of the fleeting years,
And gladness and sadness,
And longing and tears,

From the ages now gone,
The drowsing and dreaming,
To the slow coming dawn
Of this long sought gleaming;
And the flow of the ice,
And the storm cloud and frost,
When continents slept
Like a treasure that's lost.
And the shifting oceans,
The seas and the lakes,
And the volcanic crash
With its murderous quakes;
And the rivers of stone,
And the fire and the flood,
And the carnage wrought
On her fields of blood;
And the savage nude,
And the dwellers in caves,
Where the spirit yearned
And shrieked and raved.

With pleasant emotions
Enraptured at last,
I turned from the dead
And the long buried past,
Like a bolt from the skies,
My senses are hurled,
And I drink from the fount
Of a beautiful world.

PART I

O'er some gray old ruin
That's covered with mold,
Where time out of mind
In silence has rolled,

Slow plodding, I wander
With pencil and book,
Where the sunbeams flirt
With the babbling brook.
And sitting me down
On the ledge of a rock,
Where the wild waves leap
With a plunging shock,
I'm writing a line
Of some wee little friends,
Whose soft, glossy coat
So gracefully blends
With the moss-covered granite,
Bestrewing the stream,
Near the clear bubbling fountains
That glitter and gleam
In the primeval forest,
With its vast solitudes,
Where the mysteries of Nature
Seem locked in the woods.

And here, in this covert,
Still laden with mast,
When the life-giving season
Was still throbbing fast,
I found a small squirrel
That lived all alone,
In this grand old forest,
That he called his home.
And like to the coon,
And the wild honey bee,
He'd built him a home
In a great hollow tree,
And here he was living
A riotous life,

When he dropped me a hint
  That he needed a wife.
And soon after this,
  When out on a lark,
He heard in the distance
  A low, plaintive bark;
And musing, he murmured:
  "And what can this be?"
Is this but the rasping
  Of some aged tree
That, lodged in the forest
  For years in the past,
Is seeking its former
  Position at last?
Or some little robin,—
  With quivering breast,—
That strives in defense
  Of her young and her nest?"
And then, once again,
  From the woodland so dark,
There broke on his senses
  That low, plaintive bark.
And not like the sounding
  Of one that's in peril,
But the low plaintive notes
  Of a wee, maiden squirrel.
And quick as a flash now
  He sprang to his feet,
Disdaining the nut he
  Was starting to eat,
And frisking his tail that
  Was bushy and stanch,
He flew like an arrow
  From branch unto branch.
For true as the plummet,
  And true as the line,

This passion of passions
  Is surely divine!

And when he had mounted
  The hill's level crest,
He paused for a moment
  In taking some rest,
And close to his hand now,
  Among the green trees,—
Ever tossing and swinging
  Away in the breeze,—
Was a ravishing vision
  Of sweet maidenhood,
Bedecking with beauty
  The shimmering wood.
And he smiled at her,
  And she smiled at him,
While both were advancing,
  Each one on their limb.
And he, like a monarch
  That covets the earth,
With an unhidden pride
  In his high, noble birth,
And she, like a lady,
  Of the highest degree,
Advancing to welcome
  Some proud majesty.

And when every greeting
  Had gone by the way,
And his heart stood silent
  For something to say,
Then he spoke of the weather,
  The clouds and the rain,
And faltered and stammered,—
  And stammered again.

While she, with her vision
Demurely cast down,
Stood, pleading excuses
For toilet and gown.
And thus it was, humor
Went tossing about,
Like one that is angling
For some wary trout,
And flashed on the stage there,
In passing review,
A scene that's as old as
The Wandering Jew.
But, if ever a venture
Of ardent desire,
Came tripping along
With its youthful fire,
It was boldly routed
And speedily slain,
And the hours of pleasure
Continued again,

And swifter than ever
The time flew away,
Till the sun was engulfed
In the far distant bay.
Then slowly arising,
He graciously said,
With a debonair swing
Of his great massive head:
"I call on my friends in
The cool eventide,
And mounting the branches,
We swing and we ride,
Till the shadows are looming
Away in the west,

And then I'm for home and
My soft, mossy nest.
There I eat from my stores,
That are juicy and fine,
And I drink to my fill from
The sugar tree's wine,
And life's such a pleasure
The long summer day!
I ramble and gambol
And frolic and play,
Till the goddess of night
Slips into her gown,
And, drawing the folds of
Her curtains around
My wee little mansion,
So lonely and still,
No sound, save the water,
That falls at the mill.
And then, I go walking
Alone on my floor,
And peep from my window,
And gaze from the door,
Till a vision unfolds
In the hush of the night,
Like a halo of glory
Encircled with light.

"It's a beautiful home
In a great linden tree,
Where ever the birdies
Are singing to me,
And the mountains arise
And the meadows so green,
And the flashing spray
Of the blue lake is seen,

And the river nearby,
With its swift, flowing tide,
Moves out to the brink
Of the ocean so wide.
And winding around on
The marge of the vales,
There's an endless webbing
Of beautiful trails
That lead to the summit
Of the rounding swells,
On the marginal brink
Of the dark, fragrant dells.
And the vine-covered bowers
On a distant knoll,
Where I love to loiter
And ponder and stroll,
In this grand old forest,
That all the day long,
Is mocking my folly
With pleasure and song.
And my heart goes out
For a soft friendly hand,
Like others I'm meeting
All over the land.
And, oh! for a greeting,
And, oh! for a sigh,
In my dear little home
As the years go by.

"But time hurries, dearest,
And yet, ere we part,
I must unfold more clearly
The wish of my heart:
Some fairy queen I seek
To grace my lovely bowers,

Some congenial spirit dear
To speed away the hours
Of darkness and regret,—
A treasure, love, a light
For my window of sorrow,
Some gladness for to-day,
And pleasure for to-morrow.
And, then, to banish forever
This canker-worm of care
That seems so baneful now,
Existing everywhere;
And half of all I have
I barter for a wife
To cheer me on my way
Adown the stream of life."

"But no, my friend, alas!
These things can never be;
For other love I have
Sufficient unto me."
"But you forget, dearest,
For ages in the past
My ancestors have ruled
The forest and the mast.
And none may here intrude
Or, even passing, roam
In marring the beauties
Around our regal home.
For my father, remember,
Was a ruler of Spain,
And my mother a duchess,
The Lord bless her name!
And see, dearest, see me,
And see how I'm bred,
And see this, my stature,
And how I am fed.

And as for a prowess,
I falter at none,—
No squirrel that ever
Has glanced at the sun!
And my fur's just as soft
As the robe of the mole,
And my color resembles
The pure, native gold.
And please, dearest, *please,*
Just say you'll be mine,
And this day and this hour
Will be near divine."

"Yes, I know your people,
Your prowess and name,
And I've seen you enter
The struggle for fame,
And hidden securely,
For hours and hours,
I've watched you displaying
Your wonderful powers,
And often, I grant you,
I've felt rather proud,
When I've seen you carried
Away by the crowd.
But what of the prowess,
The pride, of the whale,
That crushes the ship with
A stroke of his tail?
Away with your honors,
And your stores of wealth,
And your royal lineage
And cunning and stealth.
But one gift there is,
And just one alone,

That the Master has sent
From His great gleaming throne
To gladden the youthful,
And strengthen the old,
That's bidding defiance
To honors and gold.
And, sir, that is love,
Pure love of the heart,
So lasting, e'en death
Cannot rend it apart;
Destroy this alone,
And all is destroyed,
And life is a vacuum,
And death is a void.
Nor would I exchange,
For one single hour,
This God-given rapture
Of wonderful power,
For all of earth's treasures,
And honors and fame,
Nor even for history's
Undying name.
You have much to admire,
I grant you, but this,—
But this is the fountain
Of all earthly bliss.
No, no, indeed, sir;
Your scroll, you may furl,
For I am engaged to
A very nice squirrel.''

Then white grew his face,
From these terrible blows,
As he clung to his limb
With his arms and his toes;

As harshly, and sadly,
And, oft with a sigh,
A-tremble with passion,
He made this reply:

"It was you who called from
The forest so dark,
'Twas you, too, who kindled
This long dormant spark!"
As he rose to his height,
And towering above her,
Declaring his hatred
For her absent lover.
And then he bowed to her,
And she bowed to him,
While homeward they turned,
Each one on their limb,
While the dark clouds covered
The blue of the sky,
And sharp forkéd lightnings
Were fast drawing nigh,
O'er the trail he went out,
With spirits so light,
And the spaces he leaped
Like a bird in its flight,
He was now falling short
In many a bound,
And he frothed in his rage
As he fell to the ground.
And he seemed to have aged
So much in a day,
While plodding with anger
Along by the way.

And when he had reached
His cottage at last,

He went to his hoardings
To break his long fast,
Once there, he soon found out
That he could not eat,
Each morsel seemed bitter,
And nothing was sweet.
And then he went walking
Alone on his floor,
Where he'd walked and talked
So often before,
While a moan from his heart
Swept out on the air,
Like a moan of distress,
Like a wail of despair.
'Twas the ever old story,
Of unsated love,
The spent dreams of glory—
The cold, distant glove.
But, regaining composure,
And speaking aloud,
With the fire of youth
And a spirit still proud:
"Still, there is left for me
All my worldly goods,
These enchanted mountains
And the solemn woods;
And hedged all around by
The towering rocks,
Are my beautiful gardens
Near the briar locks,
And my vast estates;
Wide, fertile, and grand,
That flash like the jewels
On a lady's soft hand;
And Ponduray, fair Ponduray,
My fickle Mary,

And my river gray—
The beautiful gray—
And the belle of Boner's Ferry.
My river, so deep,
So wide and so strong,
Where the waves ever sweep
In murmurs along,
Ever turning and yearning
In their hurrying flight,
With never a rest through
The long weary night,
But onward and onward,
And still ever on,
And on to their home in the ocean.

"But why should I worry,
There's other fine lands,
Where the mast-laden forest
Profusely expands.
Still, in all of my travels,
Around and around,
Not one single valley
Have I yet ever found,
That seems like home to me.
Here, my life I have spent,
And in sight of these waves,
I have builded my tent,
By my dead people's graves
That are far strewn around,
In many a covert
Of this holy ground.
And where should I go now,
To better my lot,
That fond recollections
May follow me not?

Will the promptings of youth
In time fade away,
Ere I slumber forever
In lasting decay;
What folly to mention
A problem like this,
As though one could gather
From strangers a bliss,
To equal this pleasant
Contentment of mind,
That distance would ruin
In leaving behind.''

PART II

''In the years that are gone,
How often I've heard
My grandfather telling,
With memory blurred,
Of some hunter's retreat,
Some pioneer's dream,
Where the rich soils mingle
With forest and stream,
When the Red Man's flight,
Then fairly begun,
Was shaping its course
With the bright Western sun,
And the buck and the bison
Were still on the throne,
And the crack of the rifle
As yet scarcely known;
Some old log cabins stood
Built under the hill,
Where the ferryboat played
So smoothly and still,

And a few paltry acres
  Were planted in corn,
In sight of the oak tree
  Where father was born.
And here, while the seasons
  Went gliding away,
To me, they were ever
  Much like yesterday;
When all of this forest,
  The glade and the glen,
In a silence yet slumbered,
  Reverting to when
The horse and the saddle
  Were the emblems of speed,
And the bit, and the bridle,
  That guided the steed,
And a strong iron hand
  Ever grasping the rein,
And a keen flashing eye,
  And a wide-awake brain,
As onward and onward
  Forever he pressed,
With his eye on the foe,
  And his face to the West.

"By the overland journey,
  Across the wide plains,
Or sought by the foe in
  The wild mountain chains,
He stayed not his journey,
  No moment was lost,
Till his banner swung free
  O'er the far Western coast.
And many a settler,
  In joining his cause,

Was slain, scalped, and mangled
With savage applause.
But along his whole route,
Where the fierce conflict rung,
Full many a beautiful
City has sprung,
Where the plowman is driving
His teams far afield,
And the toilers are reaping
An abundant yield.

"But now, our golden age
Forever has fled,
And many are the friends
I mourn with the dead.
Not a landmark is left
In the old village here,
Where the tall buildings mount
Way up in the air,
And, wherever I go,
In strolling around,
My favorite timber
Is kissing the ground.

"And, thus, with the white man,
His folly pursuing,
The whole country's going
To wreck and ruin.
In a few more decades
The forest and plain
Will revert to unending
Dry deserts again.
I've worried and tried,
And long have I planned,
For something to loosen
The grip of his hand,

But the time seemeth near
When my friends and me
Must flee for our lives
From my grandfather's tree.
For its plant, and its till,
And its sow, and its reap,
From the earliest dawn
Till it comes time to sleep,
But grandfather's gone,
With his once robust form,
And how clearly he saw
The approaching storm."

PART III

"Last eve at the spring,
When I was out walking,
Way down by the block house,
I heard noisy talking.
And all seemed confusion,
Excitement, and fear,
Like some deadly foeman
Were there lurking near.
Then hurrying homeward,
I barred every door,
And waited and listened
For the conflict's roar,
But after the darkness
In silence went by,
'They're frightened, by crackey!—
They're frightened!' said I.
But, next morning, instead
Of soldier and sword,
I found in the valley
A wonderful board

Of giant proportions,—
A hundred feet long,
All ribbed and bolted
Together so strong,
And a long bony finger
A-pointing the trail:
'Ten thousand beautiful
'Lots for sale!'
And, merciful God, they are
Planning a town;
For, men, I could see them
Out sighting around.
With flagpole and compass,
They bent to their lines,
Deep down in the timber
And wild, thorny vines,
And hilltop and valley,
And out by the moor,
Where no human footprint
Ever pressed there before.
And some time before this,
I'd noticed a man,
Away up the gulch there,
At work with a pan;
And often he'd mumble
And smile with delight;
And then in his pocket
He'd drop something bright.
And rushing to camp now,
He hurriedly told,
He'd found in the mountains
A pocket of gold.
And then off I hurried,
As never before,
For another long walk
On my old cottage floor.

And, with meditation long
And resolution deep,
I felt the coming night
Would find me shorn of sleep;
And such a world of troubles—
They made my senses reel,
And seemed to lock my heart
As with a bolt of steel.
'And why,' I asked myself,
'Why tempt the laws of fate
Or seek to bar the way
Of man's estate?
Since unto me has come
The very day and hour
When I must bid adieu
To every smiling bower?
And now, for yonder height,
Since other lands have won,
To cast one longing look
Upon the setting sun.
How beautiful the scenes
Around me doth unfold,—
The forest and the river wide,
The bay and ocean bold!
And yonder lie the vales;
And here the hills are tossed;
And spread around I see
The kingdom I have lost.
But why, regretful muse,
Since every hope is gone!'
And here I turned around
And strode me further on.

"And so I come at last
To say farewell to thee,

My birthplace and my cradle, too,
  Thou old and faithful tree.
But how can I forget!
  Will recollection fade?
Are other ties as strong
  As those that youth has made?
No, no; I 'most forgot,—
  I'm living in the past.
And so, I'll keep my home,
  And meet my fate at last.''
The twilight deepens fast,
  And darker grows the glow
As homeward now he turns
  With feeble step and slow.

PART IV

And, when outraged nature
  Could suffer no more,
He curled up in bed
  And proceeded to snore,
And he dreamed a dream
  Of the days that were gone,
When pleasures were plenty
  In youth's early dawn,
And his dream led him onward,
  And on through the maze,
To the full fruition
  Of life, and its ways.
But ever, and always,
  In the darkness, still,
Before him arose there
  That scene o'er the hill;
And there was the mountain,
  The pick, and the pan,

And by him went dashing
That same plucky man
That labor and patience
Forever employs,
In building a city
And making a noise—
Just faintly, in starting
In its infant form,
But later grows louder,
Resembling a storm.
Here, a slow-moving object
Crept into his dream,
'Twas the ark of the desert,
'Twas an old ox team.
And shortly another
Came plodding along,
Assigned to its place in
The gathering throng,
And others, and others,
And still many a one,
Till the smudging shut out
The glare of the sun.
And out of the Southland,
The East, and the West,
Like clouds overcasting,
Around him they pressed—
The great and the strong now,
The young and the old—
And loudly they called them
For silver and gold.
And from every country,
And nation and tongue,
And every condition
The whole world among.
And Europe loud echoed
The call of the plain,

While the New World welcomed
  Again and again.
And the dash of our streams,
  And the pinnacle bold,
Poured forth all their treasures
  Of silver and gold.
And our country has prospered
  In wealth and in fame,
And she's built for herself
  An undying name.
And gone is the warfare,
  And gone is the wail
That hung like a blight
  O'er the Santa Fé trail,
And gone is the hunter,
  And gone is the scout,
Who oft risked their lives
  On that far northern route.
But not of this rumble
  Just over the hill,
That grows ever louder,
  And yet louder still,
For now it's a city
  Of culture and worth,
Bespoken, and answered,
  Around the whole earth.
Behold the builders here,
  For love, for home, for lust,
One goes, another comes
  And finds his scattered dust.
He, too, must build some
  Rockribbed palace grand.
He's gone—another's here.
  And, lo! the drifting sand!
With smiles for the sunshine
  And frowns for the gloom,

And then, a long sweet rest
In some friendly tomb.

PART V

But, how vain are the calls
Of a silken couch,
When the heart is locked
In a sullen grouch.
And thus do we find him,
All nerveless again,
By goblins, who torture
The wreck of his brain,
With chatter and clatter
And beckoning hands,
And mischievous snicker
While laying their plans,
The hag and the hellion,
The imp and the sprite,
Like a horrible stench
Polluting the night.
And a spirit in black,
With a foul, noisome breath,
Came to him and whispered:
"I'm the spirit of death!
And why all this trouble
Down here in the world—
Come, join with our band,
My dear little squirr'l,
It's only a trifle
From life to the grave,
'Tis life for the coward,
And death for the brave."
And then, he awakened,
Whirled over in bed,

And springing afoot
In a passion, he said:
"What, how dare you thus,
When I've spent all my life
On the field of honor
And the lists of strife!
I'd rather die the death
And rot on the ground,
And be torn by vultures
And scattered around.
But, if this be the course
The bravest pursue,
I'm ready to prove what
A bold heart can do."
And while he made ready,
With seeming delight,
This spirit of evil
Stepped back in the night.
Then, taking his paper,
His ink, and his pen,
He wrote a few words
To his one dearest friend,
And signing his name now,
With never a sigh,
With calmness, he murmured:
"I'm ready to die."
And grabbing his knife,
He flew to his glass,
And gauging his arm for
A sure, fatal pass.
But one instant longer,
And this gleaming dart
Will plunge to the hilt
In his fluttering heart.
But he faltered a moment—
Abstracted, and still—

Like some noble statue
  Adorning the hill.
"Pray, let me assist you
  In your *delicate* task,"
Said the spirit in black
  To the squirrel at last.
And then, with her fingers
  All dabbled in blood,
She made a death cross
  O'er his pure fountain flood,
And her touch seemed to break
  This magical spell,
And out from his throat
  Leaped a horrible yell.
"It's murder! it's murder!"
  He cried with a might,
"It's murder! it's murder!"
  Loud echoed the night.
And then, from his dresser,
  He rushed to the door,
While flinging his knife
  With a crash, to the floor.
"And what in the world now!
  And what have I done?
And see how I tremble!
  And why should I run?
And was that, I wonder,
  Some demon who fell,
That threw all about me
  This magical spell?
In seeking to lure me
  To the very brink
Of a tragedy here,
  Before I could think?
Away with your falsehoods
  And dastardly cries!

You midnight purveyor
  Of slander and lies!
And thus, he hurled defiance
  At the spirit in black,
But never an answer
  Was ever sent back.
And waiting in silence
  Alone where he stood,
Repeating verbatim
  The whispering wood:
"Ah, 'twas only a nightmare,
  'Twas only a dream,
Or some passing riffle
  In life's rugged stream.
I must try once again
  For a few hours' rest,"
He said as he looked for
  The blood on his breast,
"And may I be meeting
  With more pleasant dreams,
And social companions
  And sylvan streams."
And, while Morpheus watched
  O'er his couch of ease,
He lay down to slumber
  Among the green trees.

PART VI

And now to his slumber
  Comes an intruding hand,
So gentle in its motion
  It seems a magic wand;
A vapor, indistinct,
  It beckons for the light,

And broken, flings aside
The barricades of night.
And with its noiseless feet
It dashes through the door,
While sudden imprecations
From every corner pour.
And routing and clouting
These demons of night,
Old devils, and young devils,
Went, yelping, in flight.
And then, to his slumber,
As he lay in his bed,
The Great Spotless Spirit
Came to him and said:
"My mission on earth is
The ending of strife,
For I am the Spirit—
The Spirit of Life.
And I bring glad tidings
From the Gracious Giver
Of pleasures eternal
Beyond the dark river.
And always, in passing
Along by the way,
To gladden some sorrow,
I stop but to say:
'These infinite promptings
The Master has given,
But faintly remind us
Of what is in heaven.
And what of your troubles,
Your hopes, and your plan?
All these I may hold in
The palm of my hand.'
And now, for a prowess
In all that you do—

For weakness is fatal
For lovers that's true—
But strength, vital strength,
Can brave Fate's every trial,
And constantly wear
An affable smile.
And, there's more in grace,
And the gracious giver,
Than there is in pomp,
Or the pompous liver.
And be ever as firm
As the rugged mountain;
But your life must flow
Like the sweetest fountain.
And bow to this mandate,
That comes from above,
And stake all your fortune
On the altar of love.
And for love like this,
That knoweth no bounds,
You may stamp in the dust
All your glittering crowns.
Go get you some flowers,
And a bonny, bright ring:
These mellow the hours
Of love and its sting.
And the ring you should keep
For that one cherished hour,
For the flash of its circle
Has a magical power.
And, at morn on the morrow,
At the first peep of day,
Make ample provision,
And scoff at delay,
For love is so fickle,
So keen, and so swift,

It cuts like a sickle
  In its stormy drift,
Resembling a vessel,
  As it chops and it knocks
Against the fogbound coast
  And the splintered rocks.
And go to her parents
  And graciously say:
'I've a moment to spare
  In passing to-day,
And see, I've a bunch
  Of the red-beauty rose,
Which in rank profusion
  In my garden grows;
Give these to my love,
  Whose face is as fair
As the rose that perfumes
  The sweet morning air.'
Then smiling politely,
  When moving away,
With jestures becoming,
  Turn around and say:
'I look to the adage,
  A thousand years old,
That age only brightens
  As if it were gold;
Stay never too long,
  When making a call,
And bowing and smiling,
  Depart from the hall.
And let all your actions
  Be known to the worl',
A straightforward, upright,
  And dignified squirrel.
Avoiding the brothel,
  With all of its folly,

And the low poison pens
  Of pale pink Polly,
For these things are stabbing
  Far more than the sword,
While virtue is yielding
  A glorious reward.
But, with all due caution,
  There are thousands of things,
Aside from flowers
  And glittering rings.
For the most important
  Transaction in life,
Is holding the love
  Of some noble wife.
And now, little friend,
  I am off on my way,
For millions await me
  By night and by day,
In tragedies many—
  In love, and in birth—
There are sore, bleeding hearts
  All over the earth.
From poverty's cot
  To the stations of wealth,
I enter them ever
  With quiet and stealth,
And I sow here my seeds
  With an unseen hand,
And then I'm away
  To some foreign land.'
Then stroking his brow
  With her soft finger tips,
And bending way over
  And kissing his lips,
Said: 'Press on, till the turf
  Is greening your grave,

For hope never dies
  In the hearts of the brave!' ''
Then she vanished in space,
  Like a thought that is flown,
While her charge still slept
  And slumbered alone.

PART VII

Adieu, and forever,
  To all of those things,
That progress, advancing,
  So endlessly brings,
And the primeval forest,
  With its vast solitudes,
And the mysteries of Nature
  Embraced in its woods.
And the drift of the ages,
  That are passing along,
Only adding their mite
  To the great endless throng;
For thousands of workmen
  Have since swept away,
The deep-tangled woods
  And the squirrels at play,
With faith in the future,
  With zeal, and a song,
The workers are pushing
  The whole world along.
Way down in the earth,
  While sluggards still sleep,
Enormous foundations
  Are laid, strong and deep.
And, where silence once slept
  Among the green trees,

And the wildflower tossed
  Its head in the breeze,
And where the sly hunter
  Went stalking with stealth,
There are miles upon miles
  Of splendor and wealth,
In a great throbbing city
  That stands there to-day,
On the banks of the river
  In sight of the bay;
And her ships of commerce,
  With their sails unfurled,
Arrive and depart for
  The ports of the world.
There's traffic and trade
  With the warm southern isles,
And blubber and furs
  From the cold arctic wilds,
Where many a long
  Daring struggle has won
On the desolate coasts
  Of the midnight sun;
Then, laden and sailing,
  And steering for home,
Triumphant as Cæsar
  Returning to Rome.
And rattle and rumble
  Of trolley and train,
Through cañon and tunnel
  And valley and plains,
A flash in the darkness,
  E'er leaving behind
The mine and the mill
  And the great city's grind.
A glimpse at the country
  Revealing its charms;

A call from the quail
  In the brake of the farms;
The maid with her bucket,
  Just out from the door,
With a song in her heart
  Like the meadowlarks pour;
A melody sweet
  For the day that is done,
And a *tweet! throttle! tweet!*
  To the fast-sinking sun.
Then back to the city
  With her bustling marts
And her long colonnades
  Of fanciful arts,
Her vast blocks of granite
  And concrete and steel,
And the low, drowsy hum
  Of the midnight wheel;
And driveway, and parkway,
  And vast promenade,
With fountains and statues
  Of marble arrayed;
And places of worship,
  And the one sacred name,
And the eye that gloats
  Upon panels of fame
In palace and mansion,
  With stone upon stone,
That rival in splendor
  The ages long gone.
And, oh! what a leap
  From the old hollow tree,
Where the squirrels once rambled
  And gamboled in glee,
To the wonderful strides
  Of the children of men,

From the rift in the rock,
And the low dingy den.
"Evolution's" the thought,
Conception and birth,
From lower to higher
In the world of worth.
From hunter and herder,
And dust of the plains,
And hamlet and village
And pioneer trains
To cities of comfort
And pleasures and mirth,
And homes of refinement
That girdle the earth!
O Time, with thy sickle,
Thou reapest so fast,
The forest, the jungle,
And the fields of mast!
For the lovers are gone
From their homes so dear,
And all are at rest
In their sepulcher here.
From their lands of promise,
And valley and hill,
Where age after age
They were slumbering still.
And gone, they are gone
Like the shades of the night,
From river and rill
That sparkled so bright,
Making way for another
Of glorious birth,
Instead of some trifle
That cumbers the earth.
Untarnished by time,
Unsullied the plan

Conceived by Jehovah
For the guidance of man.

HOPE

If hope is but the end of hope,
And there be nothing more,
How pleasant still to grope and grope,
As all have done before.

For every hope, it has a charm
Of pleasures still untold,
Assuaging much of life's alarm,
That never can grow old.

Then, let us still pursue in this,
That seems of life a part,
That throws a flood of silent bliss
Around our every heart.

And brighter makes the scenes afar,
Wherever we may roam,
Until at last we cross the bar,
Upon our journey home.

IS THIS THE LAND?

Is this the land Columbus found,
And this the very shore,
Where, to and fro the inlets wound
Four hundred years before?

Is this the land, this fruitful land,
Is this the new-found land?
It is.

And was it here that praises rang
Out o'er the boundless sea,
As when our fathers loudly sang
The anthems of the free?
Is this the land? Pray, tell me true:
Is this that western land?
It is.

And was it here that once they stood—
Around this sacred place—
And made this village by the wood,
The cradle of our race?
Is this the land, this blessed land,
Is this the promised land?
It is.

And was it here, upon this land,
Wherein a hope was born
Among some wild untutored band,
On that October morn?
This land of faith and hope and trust—
Is this the land he found?
It is.

And was it this the savage claimed,
The whole of this wild land,
That Christianity has tamed,
And made forever grand?
It seems so strange—so passing strange—
That this should be the land!
It is.

THERE'S LIFE IN THE TASSEL

Celia Christy's Song

THERE'S one dear thought ever comes to me,
As sweet as the thyme on the fragrant lea,
Or the sparkling dews in the early morn,
When the breeze breaks over the tasseling corn.
And life, life—it's life in the tassel
  And the fresh'ning dews in the early morn!
And life, life—there's life in the tassel.
  It's life in the germs of the tasseling corn!

And turn where I may in strolling around,
O'er the mountain peaks or the dusty ground,
Near the slumbering dead in a new-made grave,
Or tossed by the storms of the ocean wave.
And life, life—there's life in the tassel
  And the fresh'ning dews of the early morn!
And life, life—there's life in the tassel.
  There's life in the germs of the tasseling corn!

And trust—let us trust after we are gone
There's something left and it still lives on,
Encircling the heart that will keep it warm,
There's something left in a spirit form.
And life, life—there's life in the tassel
  And the fresh'ning dews of the early morn!
And life, life, there's life in the tassel,
  There's life in the germs of the tasseling corn!

BOB WHITE

Bob White, he whistles—beautiful!—
  Upon his post, or rail,
And loud he calls, as evening falls,
  Unto his mate the quail.

And in the springtime of the year
  His plaintive suit is pressed,
And down the way I've heard him say:
  "My dear, it's time to nest."

And this is done, and neatly done,
  While pleasant days go by,
In some lone spot or grassy plot,
  Beyond the wheat and rye.

And while the mother bides her time,
  Through sleepless nights awake,
Old Bob, he'll hide in meadows wide,
  Or stroll beyond the brake,

Till silence flings her spell aside,
  Then, lo! some happy morn,
Where none intrude, you'll find the brood,
  A-chipper 'neath the corn.

And ere the summer's passed and gone,
  And autumn leaves are gold,
This growth and worth that fill the earth,
  Is beautifully told.

And when the storms of winter come,
And drifting snows abound,
With lusty shout old Bob calls out
To absent ones around.

And what a wail of warning breaks
Amid the evening gloam,
And long it's heard, till every bird
Is safely in its home.

And then he strolls around awhile,
And holds one foot up high,
And turns his head, as though he said:
"The night is drawing nigh."

And while he seeks with diligence
A place that's safe and warm,
In nooks about, he points one out,—
A refuge from the storm.

And loudly now he calls his mate,
And she falls in behind,
And, bless the quail if one should fail
To "dress-parade" in line!

For Bob, they say, is awful cross,
And stern as he can be,
And of each quail, around the trail,
Demands efficiency.

And while they tramp in unison,
If you should like to know,
Old Bob, I lay, would gruffly say,
"We're tramping down the snow!"

For then it is encircling,
They move around the trail,
Until the beak of strong and weak
Befouls another's tail.

And when the snow is trampled down,
They stop, and turn about,
And, wing to wing, they form a ring,
With faces turning out.

And when the long night-vigil starts,
Upon their circle hard,
They, all abreast, securely rest,
And have a perfect guard.

And thus we see ingenuity
Outcropping in their plan,
Nor have I more observed before
In aught, excepting man.

And credit here I must bestow—
And this, I give to Bob,
And yet from she it's not in me
That I would seek to rob!

But Bob, you see, he goes abroad,
And sees the world more wide,
Much more than she can ever see—
Or any other bride.

And so I give him credit here,
And loud his praises sing,
For having wrought—or even thought
About—a guarded ring.

For while they dream the night away,
This circle forms a shield,
And there they are, much safer, far,
Than any beast afield.

And when this thought first had its birth
I hesitate to say,
And yet, I'd rob the present Bob,
And place him far away,

On down along the ages gone,
A million years or more—
But none can rob that ancient Bob,
That brought it to the fore.

For there was once a time, no doubt,
When circling, it was not,
But of this dawn, so long it's gone,
The wisest have forgot.

And while old Bob now shuts his eyes,
And seems content to be,
From mother bird there comes a word,
That sounds like *twee! twee! twee!*

"And what of you, and you, and you,
And what of every one,
And what of play along the way,
Since first the day begun?

"And have you found some grains of corn,
The reapers failed to reap,
And do you feel this ample meal
Will bring refreshing sleep?"

And smiling, all around the ring
Each quaily bows its head,
"And I and I," they make reply;
For all are amply fed.

"And what of you, my daughter, dear?
And what of you, my son?
And you and you, and others, too,
And each and every one?

"For, see, your dress is all awry,
And draggled are your feet,
And all with glee who 'Mother' me,
Should tidy look, and neat.

"And so, to all I give command,
Throughout the circle round,
And with your bill, exert your skill,
And smooth your feathers down.

"For I should be ashamed indeed
To see you all in bed,
Until each wing is glistening,
As smoothly as your head."

And there she stands and watches long
Among the shadows deep,
And o'er and o'er—there comes a snore—
For Bob is sound asleep.

And when all this the mother learned,
God knows; I cannot say;
And yet this skill she's using still
Must backward further lay,

But when, or where, or why, or how,
All this is so entwined—
If you would know, you'll have to go
To some far deeper mind.

And yet, she has her part to play;
And oft I've seen her strive,
With ruffled knot, and temper hot,
To keep these things alive.

And so it is with all that live:
They have their place to fill,
And equal here they both appear,
And, doubtless, always will.

Nor have I aught of patience here,
For those who seek to rob,
The mead of good from motherhood,
And give it all to Bob.

For God hath wrought a noble work,
And given each a place,
'Tis so with bird, and so with herd,
And so with every race.

And each of these, they have their sphere,
That Nature has designed.
And of all wrought, I know of naught
That seemeth more refined.

And Bob still whistles—beautiful!—
Upon his post or rail,
And loud he calls, as evening falls,
Unto his mate the quail.

THE STOLEN BABY

On the marge of a river, in moderate life
Lived a cotter's family of three
In youth's sturdy mold, the man and his wife
And a babe, still feeble and wee.

And the neighbors were few in those far-away lands—
The home of the cougar and deer,
And the camp-fire's gleam and the wild savage bands
Still flaunted their shadows of fear.

And the season was warm, and the night was close,
Along by that noiseless shore,
And the cotters in sight of a desolate coast,
Were asleep by their wide-open door.

And the moon rose out of the broad, briny deep,
And it hazily hung in the air,
And the nightbirds twittered for sleep, sweet sleep,
As soft as an infant's prayer.

For the day had passed with never a cloud,
As beautiful days often do,
And they sang some hymns in the evening loud,
And they mentioned the falling dew.

But a storm came out of that beautiful sky,
And torrents of water came down,
And the river arose, and it rose so high,
It went dashing along with a bound.

And the man and his wife still slumbered above
The cradled babe on the floor,
And a horseman, as swift as a message of love,
Went dashing along by the shore.

But the waters had swept all the bridges away,
In the storms of that terrible night—
Then a splash and a scream and a horse's wild neigh,
And both had vanished from sight.

And far o'er the lowlands the river now swept,
By valley and meadow and moor,
But the man and his wife unconsciously slept,
Near the innocent babe, as before.

And louder and louder this dangerous flood
Went dashing along to the sea,
Like some savage beast that, searching for blood,
In bounding from tree unto tree.

And soon this maddening stream had entered the house,
And, spreading all over the floor,
It had stolen the baby—as sly as a mouse—
And fled through the wide-open door.

Yet, in that storm-lashed cradle the baby still slept,
With never a wailing cry,
While onward this merciless torrent yet swept,
Where the ocean wave leaps high.

And who will dare rescue this frail little bark,
That the dark swirling waters defy,

But, like Moses of old and Noah and his ark,
The Master forever is nigh.

For a maiden had seen in a vision so bright,
The scene, that is herein portrayed,
And she hurried along through the storm of the night
And she knelt by the river, and prayed.

"Asleep in its cradle—and drifting to sea—
A wee, little baby!" she cried,
And the Lord saved the baby, now cooing with glee,
On the crest of the in-sweeping tide.

MARY GLOVER

I've a locket
In my pocket,
And I rock it
To and fro,
And I press it
And caress it
And I bless it
As I go.

Old and hoary,
Seems this story
That's before me
Here to-night,
But I greet it
When I meet it,
And repeat it
With delight.

'Neath this cover
Lies my lover,
And above her
  Is her name,
When I'm nigh her
My desire
Leapeth higher,
  Like a flame—

Leapeth higher,
Ever higher,
O'er the mire
  Of the flesh,
Light as feather,
Strong as leather,
Seems this tether
  Of the leash.

Mary Glover
Was my lover,
Ere above her
  Grew the sod,
Or she left me
And bereft me,
For the paradise
  Of God.

No, she's not dead,
Because she fled
Before we wed,—
  Long ago.
God, the reaper,
He will keep her
While I weep her
  Here below.

For I meet her
Oft, and greet her,
Growing sweeter
  Through the years;
And she's nearer
Now and dearer,
If not clearer
  She appears.

And at evening,
When I'm leaving
Off my grieving—
  For my bed—
O'er some sorrow
That I borrow
From the morrow,
  Since she's fled:

I have asked her
Why her Master
Should have cast her
  In the tomb,
Changing gladness
Into sadness
Next to madness
  With its gloom.

But so broken
Seems the token
That she's spoken
  To me here,
That I'm dreary—
Oft and teary—
And I weary
  Year by year.

God in spirit
Why not hear it
When I'm near it,
  Mary dear,
Am I better,
As a debtor
To some fetter,
  While I'm here?

Can't you shake me,
Dear, and wake me,
Can't you make me
  Understand,
Why its midnight,
Ere the daylight
Comes to brighten
  Every land?

And this locket,
In my pocket,
Need I rock it
  Any more—
Need I press it
And caress it,
While I bless it
  O'er and o'er?

Aye, forever,
I shall never
Seek to sever
  Any part,
Of these tidings
And confiding
That are gliding
  Through my heart.

Still my lover,
Mary Glover's
Still my lover
True and kind,
Carnal cravings
Are but ravings,
Light as shavings,
In my mind.

I STILL MISS THEE

I STILL miss thee in my rambles,
And I fail to hear thy voice,
Where the songster blithely gambols
And the scenery is choice;

Yes, I miss thee, dearest, miss thee,
When the eve is growing late,
In the moonlight where I kissed thee
By thy little garden gate.

Where the trees hang o'er the river,
And the current's swift and strong,
There'll be memories forever
That will all around me throng:

In the nighttime, ere I slumber,
At the breaking of the day,—
Scenes of pleasure without number
That can never pass away.

Other arms may clasp me tightly,
Other tears may flow with mine,
But no other can delight me
With a spirit so divine,

As that one bright angel yonder,
On the sloping of the hill,
Where I often, musing, wander
In the summer evenings still.

TIRED OUT

And why should one
Sit here and write?
It won't be long
Till all is lost
In that long night
That holds the throng.

And monuments
Of granite rock,
And chiseled name—
Can such as these
Delay or block
A waning fame?

No, no, indeed!
For time will come
And fling her pall
O'er this huge stone
And make it dumb,
And scattered all.

And names in books,
And, what are they?
They last a spell.
Alas, for those
Who pass away!
If they could tell!

Nor names, nor books,
Nor monuments
  Can ever stay
This blighting hand
That God hath sent,
  To wield decay.

Commingling all
In one vast heap,
  We choose our lot;
And here we lay
Us down to sleep—
  And be forgot.

THE BENT OF ALL THINGS

When undisturbed by man,
Or foiled of its desire
In all that may exist,
Like gravitates to like.
And so, the grass grows on
Among its fellows green,
And feels a pride, maybe,
The same as you and I.
And thus with every life
That time shall ever know:
The beast will seek the beast,
And birds call back aloud
To other birds again—
An image of themselves.
And so this law lays hold
On every creature born,
And throws its charms around
The wayward feet of all.

And lurking in its lair,
As might a beast of prey,
It drives the savage on
To be a savage still,
And mingle with his own.
And if a doubt may be
Existing in your mind,
Go hide yourself a while
Within the jungle deep,
And list to every cry
That breaks the silence there.

MY COUNTRY

Heart of my heart, soul of my soul,
My country is to me,
I've seen her destiny unfold
In matchless majesty,
The while she helps the fallen rise
And chimes along the sea,
In a struggle for humanity
That's marching on and on.

And let them weigh us, if they will,
And scrutinize our plan
That stamps upon the lowest brow
The Brotherhood of Man.
And this is but the early spring—
Our harvest will be grand!—
In this struggle for humanity
That's marching on and on.

And so we hail, with ecstasy,
The morning, with its light,

And dare this venom of distrust
  That's hidden in the night;
And vow to live, and vow to die,
  In cherishing the right,
In this struggle for humanity
That's marching on and on.

GOODNESS

When goodness overflows the heart
  The face bespeaks the inner flood,
And tunes to rapture, every part,
  Angelic-like, with tingling blood.

THE COLUMBIA RIVER

There's a grand old river,—
The Columbia River,
That's laughing and smiling
  In evident glee,
While here it is gliding
And there it is tiding,
Some ponderous vessel
  On down to the sea.

And over this river,—
This broad brimming river,—
Where hope ever lurks
  In the floods of the stream,
At evening and morning
There's never a warning
That comes over one
  Like the flash of a dream.

And mild is the river,—
This peace-loving river,
Resembling an emblem
  Of heaven above,—
Where lovers go boating,
And leisurely floating,
And music, sweet music,
  Is mingled with love.

Enchanting, this river,—
This classical river,
With village and hamlet
  And cities between,
And wonderful climate
Forever entwines it
With vineyards and orchards
  And meadows of green.

And this is *our* river,—
Our own sacred river,—
But vessels may enter
  From countries afar,
When empty or laden,
To traffic and trade in
The various nations
  Outside of her bar.

O beautiful river!—
Thou great Western river,—
As dear to our hearts
  As the sweetest of flowers!
Then go ye, and meet her,
And sail her and greet her,
And romp with your children
  Among her green bowers.

EXECUTION

It's simply rot, to plan and plot,
And never execute;
The thing for you and me to do,
Is go right off and do't.

The finest plan conceived by man
Is but an airy mite,
Unless the thing is on the wing,—
A-flutter in its flight.

I AM A WOMAN STILL

I am a woman still,
For yet I hold me true
To God's eternal law.
And looking unto this,
I see a star of hope
Within the future hid;
And thitherward I turn
With gladness in my heart.
And while I note the drift
That all around me lies,
Unmoved, I bide my time,
And hope to find in this
That golden afternoon
Of blessed motherhood.
Unlike my sisters here,
That fret their lives away
In some secluded room,

This prattling babe of mine
Will ever be to me
An inspiration strong
In my declining years.
And why? My God hath come
And walked along with me,
And pointed out the ways
And measure of my life.
The way that He designed,—
The ways of happiness,—
And unto these I bow
In mute submission down,
Remaining ever true
To His unchanging law.
For in His kingdom wrought
I am the tender vine,
And He, my stronger self,
He is the sturdy oak;
And so I look to him,
And leave to other hands
The destiny of State.

THEY MET NO MORE

They met and loved as lovers do
When heart responds to heart,
Until at last the wave went past,
And then they drew apart.

The man was pleased beyond degree,
The lady never cried,
When, bowing low, they turned to go
To countries far and wide.

The autumns came and cast the leaf,
  The years wove out and in,
But this sweet thought the Lord had brought
  Was never found again.

They roved afar in distant lands,
  Attaining wealth and fame,
But ever still the eye would fill
  At mention of a name.

Their steps sped not so swiftly now—
  The two were growing old—
Yet still that face, and form and grace
  Before them ever strolled.

"And what is life?" they often asked;
  A fickle thing, a breath!"
Outwailing,—he, as well as she,—
  Until they slept in death.

LIFE

When stripped of all its fallacies
  That modern follies bring,
You'll find in sweet realities,
  Life's but a simple thing:
A glowing heart, a smiling face,
And tears for all distress,
And winsome ways, that leave a trace
  Of lasting happiness.

FRIENDSHIP

Should early friendship still prevail?
Old age alone can tell the tale;
For what the future still may hold
No mortal yet has ever told.
So, on your conduct much depends,
How long in life you hold your friends;
For this still wields a mighty sword
That all the ages have adored;
And wisdom bows before it oft
And bears its laurels high aloft.
So conduct, more than aught I know,
Should be the aim of high and low,
For this is where the secret lies
That grows with time and never dies.
Aside from this, who wins to-day,
To-morrow brings a swift decay,
O'erwhelming all, and all is lost,
Amid the storm and tempest tossed.
And of two friends, beware the loud,
And watch the gentler hold the crowd,
And this as well you doubtless know
And see it oft where'er you go;
The saddest, sweetest news e'er broke
Is always in a whisper spoke;
And should some loved one pout awhile,
Be slow to wrath and quick to smile,
For one sweet smile and graceful bow
Has often quelled a brewing row,
And held some friend secure and fast,
A heritage while life may last.
And thus it is, in books of old,
The writers oft these things have told

With emphasis, and bated breath,
That left an imprint after death.

So on your conduct much depends,
How long in life you hold your friends,
For should attachment still prevail
Old age alone can tell the tale.

THESE THREE

There is a place more dear to me
  Than all the gladsome morn,—
A place that lies along the sea,
  Where liberty was born,
And how all this comes back again
  And magic speeches fall,
From giant intellects within
  That Philadelphia hall.
And while the bell tolls out the hour,—
  All solemnly, and long,
For men of might, and men of power,
  That dare oppose the wrong,—
Those fearless ones, I see them now,
  As each one takes his place,
And calmly, too, they take that vow,—
  A credit to our race.
And louder now,—the bell again,—
  Its tolling seems to fall,
And far without, and deep within
  That Philadelphia hall.
'Twas war! At first our cause looked blue,—
  The strongest heart might chill,—
But, pshaw! we knew a thing or two.
  The slopes of Bunker Hill!

But winter was upon us now,
  And we were weak and poor,
And trouble showed upon our brow,
  With wolves around the door.
And Valley Forge, so dark she lay,
  She smiling set the king,
Till George, you know, went out to pray,—
  And golly! what a spring!

THE BATTLE OF BUNKER HILL

There was darkness o'er the ocean,
  And the night was hot and still,
When a fleet in Boston harbor
  Lay in sight of Bunker Hill.

But the British slept so soundly
  In their camps along the sea,
Not dreaming of a vigilance
  That's born of liberty.

For this noble Declaration now
  Had fired all the land,
And the grandest page in history
  Was drawing close to hand.

And while their sentries called the hours,
  Through that short, sultry night,
We were throwing up entrenchments
  On a promontory's height.

And we planted there our cannon
  In the midnight hours still,
And every man had pledged his life
  To die for Bunker Hill.

And now, the time had flown so fast,
And Venus rose so high,
A mellow fringe of orange showed
Along the eastern sky.

And while the stars yet dimmer grew,
And darkness stole away,
Around the armies broke at last
The dawning of the day.

And farewell to the babies
And the wives of many tears,
And a hurried note to mother
By the youths of tender years;

And the sun had kissed the ocean,
And the fields of waving corn,
And sent congratulations to
A nation yet unborn.

And when the fogs had lifted,
And the mists had blown away,
There arose a mighty tumult,
From the British in the bay.

For they saw our forts a-building,
And the glitter of the gun,
And their anger kept on rising
Like the rising of the sun.

And now the battle opened
With the early morning light,
And Boston woke from slumbering,
But not from sudden fright.

For our men continued laboring
Among the shot and shell,
With an ardor, and devotion, too,
That few have done so well.

Then silence swept across the bay,
And hope revived again,
In all save those who, on their steeds,
Had fled their fields of grain,

As messengers, to spread the news
Through all the friendly land,
And ask assistance for their friends,
With Prescott, and his band.

And while excitement grew apace,
The morning went so soon,
The sun had reached his zenith,
And the hour hand was noon.

And Howe had gone from Boston long
To land upon our shore,
And many who had gone with him
Would meet and part no more.

And they've landed, and they're forming,
And they're marching up the hill,
With an armament of splendor,
Flashing in the evening still.

And they're firing from their vessels
And their army on the shore,—
Such a storm of awful tumult
Boston never saw before.

But, while marching, coolly marching,
Proudly marching up the hill,
There's a silence in our fortress,
That is surely boding ill.

"How much nearer?" plead our soldiers,
As they draw a deadly aim,
"How much nearer?" god of battles,
What a slaughter, what a shame!

And they've reached that fatal distance,
See the white within the eye,
And a storm of fire greets them
When our fortress makes reply;

And we've checked them, and they're beaten,
And they're flying from the scene,
And they've left a host behind them,
Dead, or dying, on the green.

In confusion, down the hillslope,
To their landing on the shore,
O'er a field of wide destruction,
Boston never saw before.

But they're forming, and they're marching,
Faintly marching up the hill,
With their army badly shattered,
In the sultry evening still.

And they're sullen, with their madness,
And they'll stagger from the blow,
For our army's calmly waiting,
Like a tigress crouching low.

Again, the crash and shock of battle,
  Sweeps along our peaceful shore,
On the land, and on the ocean,
  They come firing as before;

But again: "Our point of vantage!"
  Hear our valiant Prescott cry,
As a crash of frightful carnage
  From our fortress makes reply.

See them falter, see them quailing,
  See them flying from the scene,
Another host is left behind them,
  Dead, or dying, on the green.

"Powder, powder!" cry our soldiers.
  "Will assistance never come?
Seest thou some flying squadron?
  Hearest thou some friendly drum?"

And while they battle for their country—
  And it's noble thus to die,
Two hundred British cannon now
  Make ready to reply.

Marching, marching, sadly marching,
  Madly marching up the hill,
Torn, and bleeding, and protesting,
  In the evening later still.

Again they're firing from their vessels,—
  Not their army on the shore,
But the bayonet that glistens
  Greets the cannons' steady roar.

And they've reached our thirty paces,
But you know the reason why,—
Why the fury of our fortress
Was so weakened in reply.

And while we failed to check them here,
And to hurl them from the scene,
Another host of silent forms
Lay bleeding on the green.

Noble soldiers, noble generals,
Noble cause, for which they fought!
O my country, looking backward,
What a century hath wrought!

To our army and its leaders,
In those midnight hours still,
And their bravery, and devotion
In the battle on the hill,—

Behold yon sacred monument,
As it towers to its height,
With its beacon ever burning,—
Ever burning for the right,

Throwing out a bright reflection,
To the world in darkness still,
Dedicated, with affection,
To our dead at Bunker Hill.

MEANNESS SHOWS

And what of thee, thou imp of earth,
That parents dared to give thee birth?
What wanton, craven beast was she,
And foul designing monster he,

To plant such seed, and hail its growth,
That decency should damn you both.
And go thy way, thou offspring, go,—
Go weeping on, that all may know
Thy cruelties and hateful spite
Are but reflections of that night
When every thought, and every deed,
Found pleasure most in hearts that bleed!
Uncouth in form, and face, and look,
How dare you gaze upon the brook,
Or seek the glass, and ramble o'er
This horrid thing, you stand before?
For these things tell, without and in,
Unerring, as the cock the wind.
And lays life's story wholly bare
In words, all plainly written there.
These grooves that mar thy features deep,
Why grow they still, awake or sleep?
Aye, these are records, every one,
As like the notches on the gun.
And what a string of them, I see,
And still they grow, continually,
And this one here that gaps apart,
This, doubtless, broke some trusting heart,
And threw a cloud before its sun,
E're life had scarcely yet begun.
So deep it is, and wide, and strong,
It tells a story of some wrong,
No moralist, nor they who preach,
Nor prison bars, can ever reach.
And this one, too, less wide and deep,
Has doubtless caused some one to weep,
And left its notch upon the gun
As plainly as the other one;
And so each face that's marred and lined
Does but reflect the inner mind.

THE LAWS THAT ARE

What made this vale so sweet and fair;
And rounded off the hilltop there;
And sprinkled o'er this fairy scene
And endless carpeting of green;
And painted white the peaks with snow,
And made the dashing streams below?
Why, it was but the laws, my child,—
The ever never-ending laws.

For law it was that caused the birth
Of all we see upon the earth;
And flung the seeds o'er every plain,—
The seeds of fruit, and seeds of grain;
And brought to life each living thing,
From master man to mites that wing.
And law as well that flung afar
The endless fields of every star;
And grandly made them, every one,
And made the moon, and made the sun;
And swung them out in endless space;
And ever holds them in their place.
And every greening blade of grass,
And every atom that we pass,
And every leaf, and every straw,—
All these are but results of law.
And so it is, from age to age,
We write this down on every page,
It's but the laws that are, my child,—
The ever never-ending laws.

And while some few may try to sway
This never-ending mystery,
We find it still, howe'er it came,
Remaining ever still the same.

THE NIGHTINGALE

I HAIL thee, thou wizard,
When June flings her banner,
Aflash to the breeze
  In the grand summertime,
While others are snoring,
Thy melody's pouring
Out over the forest,
  A lullaby's chime.
Soft piercing the darkness,
That wonderful cadence,
Down deep in the valley
  Alone I can hear,
Thy spritely outpourings,
I'm ever adoring,
And long for thy flutings
  When evening is near.
Not thou, to the mountains
That dim in the distance,
But rather the shadows
  Along by the vale,
Thou piper of evening,
Thy twitter is leaving,
The thought of another,
  My sweet nightingale.
And that's why I hail thee,
When June flings her banner
Aflash to the breeze
  In the grand summertime,

When others are snoring
Thy melody's pouring
Out over the forest,—
A lullaby's chime.

THE SPIRIT

Ever, like the voice of a siren,
So musical and sweet,
Or the distant pipings
Of some dirge-like requiem,
O thou enchantress,
Thou babbling babe of time,
Thou child of the eternal!
In the morning of birth,
The noontide of life,
Or the evening of death
Thou art ever present.
And, above the rush and madness
Of a distracted world,
We feel the touch
Of an unseen hand,
And hear thy gentle voice
That ever calls aloud:
"Oh, come, thou wand'ring one,—
Oh, come thou unto me!"
And ever, aye, forever,
With thy magic wand,—
Or the effulgent rays
Of the noonday sun
That floods the earth
In a halo of glory,—
Thou sowest the seeds
Of bread and flowers,

And flinging thy mantle
Of green around the whole world,
Thou entwinest thy loving tendrils
About the heartstrings of men,
And makest of the crude earth
A habitation and a home.

THE GODDESS OF LIBERTY

HAVE you heard about our woman,
She's no mortal, she's no human,
Yet she is the grandest of all women
  Ever born along the sea.
Just a word about this woman,
Neither mortal, neither human,
The pride of all our country
  And the emblem of the free.
Descendant of a noble race,
  And pure and sturdy stock,
But prouder of a heritage
  Around the Plymouth Rock.
And she it was who waved that brand
  When Columbus saw the light,
Guardian angel of the new-found land,
  And queen of the starry night.
And she who urged our fathers on,
  With motherly devotion,
The night they struck against the wrong
  And made tea in the ocean.
And she was there at Faneuil Hall,
  With balance-scales a-poise,
Weighing out justice to one and all
  'Midst that historic noise.
And she was with Jones at Whitehaven,

She led him 'long the coast,
And she was with Perry
At the battle of Lake Erie,
When the British ships were lost.
And she was in love with Jefferson,
She laid a wreath on his grave,
And she adores still to-day
The noble and the brave.
And she touched the heart of Paul Revere,
She knew the day, the hour,
And she it was that led the way
To light the Old Church tower.
She wept for joy at our Yorktown,
And when the deed was done,
A halo of glory shone around
The name of Washington.
She kissed the brow of Nathan Hale,
With a woman's prodigality,
And she left there the stamp that will never fail,
The stamp of immortality.

O thou storm-lashed and blood-splashed emblem of justice,
Ever leading thy children by land and sea,
Where flying shot and bursting shell,
And quiv'ring flesh their story tell,
'Mid clashing arms, and waves that swell
And reel and fall, and last farewell,
And pools of blood where some one fell,
Fell in the cause of freedom!
And what we've done, we'll do again,
To help the cause of freedom win,
And far from home I hear the din—
We're marching on to victory!

CROSSING THE DELAWARE

'Twas Christmas night in seventy-six,
And frosty was the air,
But Washington had laid his plans
To cross the Delaware,
All night, they strove among the ice,
With naught to keep them warm,
And when they landed in the morn,
Enveloped in the storm,
Few scenes we find in war's alarm,
Of bravery, more rare,
For many a noble-hearted youth
Had crossed the Delaware,
The dangerous Delaware,
The icy Delaware,
For many a noble-hearted youth
Had crossed the Delaware.

And marching down to Trenton town,
Their enemies to snare,—
This fearless band of patriots,
That crossed the Delaware,—
And while the sluggish Hessian lay
A-toying with his dream,
No noisy sound of drum was heard
To echo down the stream,—
As silent as that starry host,
Whose endless fields expand,—
But every man had come to fight
For home and native land:
The freedom of his land,
The honor of his land!

But every man had come to fight,
For home and native land.

When duty calls where danger lurks,
The bravest and the fair,
Are always ready with a heart,
To cross some Delaware.
A swift surprise and capture quick,
And thus the deed was done,
And o'er the field of battle rang
The name of Washington.
And now a thousand men we bore
As prisoners away,
And only four we left behind,
Upon that winter day,—
That brilliant winter day,
That stormy winter day;
And only four we left behind
Upon that winter day.

Returning now along the stream,
With ample time to spare,
They waved a token to their friends,
Beyond the Delaware.
And ere the sun had sunk to rest,
Or flashed a single gleam,
We find this band of fearless men
Returning up the stream,
And while their bands of music played
Some pieces, rich and rare,
They marched back to their boats again,
And crossed the Delaware,—
The noted Delaware,
The classic Delaware;
They marched back to their boats again,
And crossed the Delaware.

THE INTENT IS ALL

If I be true in all my thought,
If I be ever true,
I need not fear what I have wrought,
Whatever I may do.

For God perceives in my design,
The whole of my desire,
Just as he sees this heart of mine
A-flounder in the mire.

And so my honor bears me on,
My honesty beside,
And so it will until I'm gone,
Whatever may betide.

For justice is my only thought,
And this, I still pursue,
And seek for kindness, as I ought,
In everything I do.

And when my own are housed and clad,
And comfort claims the day,
I may not stop because I'm glad,
And fritter life away;

My God hath called, and I must go,
And labor with a will,
For He demands this much, I know,
Of all his creatures still.

And so my days and nights abound
In constant usefulness,
And well I know, if I be crowned,
I can do nothing less.

THE BETTER LIFE

About all that we need
In this world of ours,
In clearing the shoals of strife,
Is a loaf of bread,
And a bunch of flowers,
And the love of a noble wife;

And a plain old home,
And plenty of room,
And garments of cotton or wool;
And a garden back,
Where the flowers can bloom,
And a heart that is always full;

And a few dear friends,—
And only a few,
For numbers are always a care,—
And these should be
Congenial and true,
And free as the wide open air.

And a baby or two,
To strengthen the tie,
And to gladden the glowing dawn,
And to bathe our brow
When death is nigh,
And remember us when we're gone.

And then, for the sick,
And those who are aged,
We should do whatever we can,
In alertness ever
Responding quick,
To the needs of our fellow-man.

THE MATTERHORN

Ghostlike in the tranquil evening,
Triumphantly greeting the morn,
As when thy clouds are leaving
The tip of the Matterhorn,
The glistening Matterhorn,
The ponderous Matterhorn,—
As when thy clouds are leaving
The tip of the Matterhorn.

Aglow in thy pristine beauty,
Remaining forever sublime,
Thou soldier of trust and duty,
Thou sentinel rock of Time,
Thou gladdening rock of Time,
Thou wonderful rock of Time,—
A soldier of trust and duty,
Thou sentinel rock of Time.

Surviving the countless ages,
And scoffing the world to scorn,
Thou prince of the mountain sages,
The tip of the Matterhorn,
The mystical Matterhorn,
The beautiful Matterhorn,—
Thou prince of the mountain sages,
The tip of the Matterhorn.

THE WITCHES OF SALEM TOWN

Some witches once,—the story runs,—
  Who lived in Salem town,
They spread their witchery abroad
  In all the lands around;
And made the cows give bloody milk,
  By practicing their spells,
And brought about a world of woes
  By drying up the wells;
And filled the land with awful plagues,
  Of every known degree,
And then, we're told, they sought to hide
  This cunning infamy.
And while the witches further spread
  Their maladies around,
In sore distress, the records say,
  The folk of Salem town,
Led on by Cotton Mather now,
  Sought out these grannies gray,
And charged them with a host of crimes
  And led them all away,
To face, perchance, an awful charge,
  Preferred against the witch,—
Or were she one of poverty,
  Or one among the rich,—
Yes, led them off as prisoners,
  And often made them tell
Of things that were impossible,—
  And, now we know it well.
And judges sat on every case,
  And oft it was they found,
So much of proof against the witch,
  In court at Salem town,

That she was led away to die
Among the faggots' blaze,
While "Hallelujahs!" rent the air
In early Salem days.
But were they here, who'd say to-day,
They set the town afire,—
Those innocents of other times,
That Salem's loth to sire?
And, Lord, we pray they may return
To every town on earth,
That they may bear aloft a torch
Of common sense and worth;
That all may see how ignorance
Has swept the world around,
Not only here, but everywhere,—
As well as Salem town.

THE WAYS OF GOD

What prospects flash before pure youth!
What dreams we have from day to day,
Till age comes by and tells the truth,—
Poor feeble age, that's found decay.
But what is truth when life is gone,
And deeper grows the evening gloam,
And cold and swift the night comes on
And calls us back to home, sweet home?
To clods that lie beneath our feet,
And rivers wide and boundless sea,
For o'er and o'er all these repeat,
"Come back to me! Come back to me!
Come back, ye aged and feeble ones;
And come, O man of strength and pride,
And you, my daughters and my sons,
Come back to greet the flowing tide.

And come, ye infants still at breast,
  Come back to sleep beneath the sod,
And mingle with the dust and rest,
  Along the way that leads to God,—
The ways of all that breathe and live:
  The birth, the growth, the ripened grain,
Come back," he cries, "and freely give
  These gladsome pleasures back again!"

A BAD EXCHANGE

If I were you,
  And you were me,
How different
  We two would be.
For I'd be fat,
  And you'd be lean,
And you'd be good,
  And I'd be mean.
And I'd be short,
  And you'd be long,
And I'd be weak,
  And you'd be strong.
And you'd be rich,
  And I'd be poor,
But poverty
  Is such a bore!
Let's stay just where
  We are, old man,
And try and do
  The best we can.
For you'd be great,
  And I'd be small,
And you'd be out
  If I should call.

And you'd be swift,
  And I'd be slow,
And then, we'd drift
  Apart, you know.
And I'd wear rags
  And beg my bread,
And you'd drive by
  Nor turn your head.
And leave me here
  Upon the road,
To struggle on
  Beneath my load.
And I should fret
  And you'd be glad,
And this would make
  Me glum and sad.
For I'd be spurned,
  And you'd be blessed,
And you'd be gay,
  And I distressed,
And I'd be shunned,
  And you'd be sought,
And I'd be jailed,
  And you would not,
And I'd be tried
  In open court,
And you'd sit by
  And jolly o'er't,
And go and swear
  Upon the stand,
That I had been
  An awful man
My whole life long,
  The same as now,
Since once I stole
  My neighbor's cow.

And you'd be kissed
By ladies, sure,
And I'd be hissed
From every door.
And all my friends
Would be disgraced,
And all your crimes
Would be erased.
And I'd be left,
And you they'd call,
And you'd be it
At every ball.
And you'd be proud,
And drink your wine,
And that would break
This heart of mine.
And you'd be hailed
All o'er the land,
And I'd be scoffed
On every hand,
And I'd be old,
And you'd be young,
And you'd go free,
And I'd be hung,
Because I stole
My neighbor's cow,
That's feeding on
The common now.

THE GRANITE SPRING

Come to the granite spring, May,
Come to the granite spring,
Come when the songsters sing, May,
Come when the songsters sing!

Come with your simple truth, May,
  Come with your simple truth,
Come in your glowing youth, May,
  Come in your glowing youth.
And ere the sun has sunk, May,
  And ere the sun has sunk,
Come to the shelving bank, May,
  Come to the shelving bank.

But, oh, the years went by,
And the spring went dry,
  And the rustic seat in the shade,
Like the one who trod
On that winding trail,
  At last in the dust was laid.

I LOVE

I LOVE the summer's glow
And the winter's snow,
And the sleigher's shout
  And the tinkling bell;
And the music sweet,
And the flying feet,
And the one dear pledge
  That is treasured well;

And the plan that's laid,
And the vow that's made,
And the hope that brightens
  The future's mist;
And the noble twain
That ever remain
The same as the day
  They plighted their tryst;

And the fruitful tree,
And the children's glee,
That gladdens the glow
  Of the evening hearth;
And the songs they sing,
And the joys they bring
As we near the brink
  Of the cold, damp earth.

And I love the plot
By the ruined cot,
And a cooling draught
  From grandfather's spring;
Where the ferns grow wild,
And the tulips smile
And the songsters flit
  On hurrying wing;

And the sounds of spring,
And the woodland's ring,
And the plowman's song
  In the distant field;
And the cloudy cloak
Of the curling smoke,
And the horn that's wound
  For the noonday meal;

And the breeze that blows,
And the stream that flows,
And the brook that murmurs
  Its gurgling tune;
And the man that tries,
And the maid that sighs
For a mild, clear day
  In the coming June;

And the dews that fall,
And the frosty sprawl
That looks like the work
  Of a mystic hand;
And the tranquil night,
And the dawning light
That comes like a blessing
  That some one's planned;

And the lark that soars,
And the storm that roars
A warning to all
  O'er the oceans wide;
And the tide that turns,
And the moon that yearns
For the life once more
  Of a youthful bride.

And the blood-red Mars,
And the twinkling stars,
And the hazy maze
  Of the Milky Way;
And the rainbow's hue
And the azure blue,
That, deeper and darker,
  Beyond us lay;

And the pith and pride
Of the landscape wide,
And the cloudlike curtain
  That's hung so high;
And the gladsome play
Of the breaking day,
And the crimson flush
  Of the evening sky;

And the forest deep,
And the valley's sweep,
And the flowers that gladden
  The lonely trail;
And the maiden's await
By her swinging gate
For one who was lost
  In the offing sail.

A HOPELESS BACHELOR

"And tell me now, ye moaning winds,
  That round my dwelling rave,
Is there no place on all the earth
  Where man may quiet have,—
No cavern underground for him,
  Or howling wilderness,
Where woman never comes along
  To mar his happiness?"
And, then, just like a raging storm,
  I heard the wind reply:
"In all my travels 'round the earth,—
  Not I, my friend, not I."
Likewise, a chorus seemed to break
  The silence, far and near,
From everything possessing life:
  "Nor here, nor here, nor here."
The valleys joined the distant hills,
  The insect, with its chant,
Poured forth denials all day long:
  "We can't, we can't, we can't."
And all that breathe, and all that know,—
  A voice from everything,
And great and small, and high and low,
  And man, and fin, and wing.

HOMESICK

I've traveled much, and yet,—alack!—
  Wherever I may roam,
In fancy still I wander back
  Around my youthful home.
Although its site was cold and drear,
  And stony lay the lea,
Forever still it seemeth dear
  And sacred unto me.

THE BABE IN THE TREE

And where are you going,
  My dear little man,
Away down the road now
  As fast as you can?
And day after day
  Along where you've toed,
I find a wee track
  In the dust of the road.

"Yes, I hurry along
  Just as fast as I can,
When I go down the road, sir,
  To visit Aunt Han.
You know where she lives, sir,
  Down over the hill,
And she sleeps every night
  With my old Uncle Bill.
And both are as funny
  As funny can be,

'Cause they found a wee babe
In an old hollow tree.
So I go every day
To their home o'er the hill
'Cause I love my Aunt Han
And my old Uncle Bill.
And Auntie, she told of
This tree, far away,
And I went out to hunt,
And I hunted all day,
And I found it at last,
With a hole near the ground,
But some old rotten wood, sir,
Was all that I found.
And I told them of this,
And they both laughed at me,
And they said there is more
In the old hollow tree."

BED BUGS

"Come on there, you fellows!
The man's fast asleep,
Come on! Don't you hear me,
I just took a peep.
And slyly, I warn you,
As onward you creep,
And we'll all have a feast
On his carcass."

Then out from the drawers,
Majestic and tall,
And out from each crevice
And crack in the wall,

The bugs all responded,
The great and the small,
Aflush with delight
At the prospect.

Resembling an army,
Advancing, they came,
The old and the young now,
The halt and the lame;
For vantage is vantage
In life's rugged game,
With darkness, and slumber
Assisting.

And now, from the vanguard,
As onward it flows:
"Ye gods ain't he luscious!"
Says one on his nose,
While others approve it,
At work on his toes,—
When bugs are a-plenty
All summer.

But hark you! it seems there's
A skip in his snore,
"Let's quiet a moment
And let him roll o'er."
But all of a sudden
He utters a roar,
And flounces, and bounces
And tumbles.

And "Thunder and blazes!
What's that at my feet?"
And *slam* go the covers,
Exposing the sheet,

But never a vermin
  Is found in retreat,
For all have escaped
    In the darkness.

And now on his belly,
  And now on his back,
He thinks,—surely thinks,—
  He has found something black,
And, gritting his teeth hard,
  He gives it a crack,
But nothing is ever
    Discovered.

Then raging, distracted,
  He springs for his light,
And flooding his room
  In the hush of the night,
He damns all creation
  With all of his might,
'Cause bugs are a-plenty,
    All summer.

THE HIDDEN GOAL

When evening comes, none should forget
That other suns have often set;
And from the past, it seemeth plain,
This very sun will rise again.
And since, with ease, these things are done,
From day to day, and sun to sun,
May there not be some light ahead?
A light to rouse the slumb'ring dead,

And rend in twain this awful gloom,
And tear asunder every tomb,
And say to each: "Arise, my friend!
This death, that once you thought the end,
Was but a nap,—a short repose,
For man to guess, and God, who knows?
Arise, I say, and break this bond,
And smile at all that lies beyond,
For this is far too deep for you
To fathom God's eternal blue,
Or learn, as yet, the reasons why
He has decreed all flesh must die.
But this should not disturb your dream.
And why? Behold this placid stream
That comes to rest amid the sea,
But not for all eternity.
For yet, in time, that which has been
Will all return and be again.
And of this grave, that opens wide,
Man's like the stream that seeks the tide,—
A stream, that's ever flowing on,
And yet a stream that's never gone.

THE STORM

A DROP of rain fell down and down,
  A thing of passing worth,
Until at last this tiny sphere
  Had reached the waiting earth.

And then, another drop there was,
  Of but the slightest weight,
And this, as well, went down and down
  To join its little mate.

As louder now the storm arose,
  And wilder grew the night,
Some other drops went down and down
  To join them in their flight.

And soon a shower these become,
  Fast merging into rain,
And millions now went down and down,
  A-flooding all the plain.

And sharply, too, the lightnings leaped
  Out boldly from the cloud,
And thunders boomed and boomed again
  Their mutterings more loud.

And swift the winds went dashing by,
  And streams began to roar,
And high and higher rose the flood,
  O'erleaping every shore.

And darkness flung her robes afar,
  Beneath an inky sky,
And death went by and by again
  In waters dashing high.

BESSIE BOUNTON

In sight of the city,
In sound of the town
Where wealth and beauty
Goes round and round,
Through the long, cold night
I'm still ungowned,
Ungowned on the Cutler Mountain.

With rubbish and logs
For my humble bed,
And these lurid flames
Encircling my head,
And this is the way that
I suffered and bled,—
And bled on the Cutler Mountain.

When lured to my death
By a fiendish brute,
And one who would rob
And burn and shoot,—
And how can I rest
In my grave so mute,—
So mute on the Cutler Mountain?

All burned to a crisp,
My eyes, face, and hair,
And frozen like marble
My figure so fair,
Oh, agonies mine!
My agonies share,
With me, on the Cutler Mountain.

For I'm shot and burned
And stripped and froze,
And tortured for days
By a fly that blows,
And eaten by maggots,—
And God only knows
I'm here on the Cutler Mountain.

And these tortures here,
Amid the evening gloam,
Such sweet, sweet music
Beneath the starry dome,

And the portals open,
And the angels come,
They come to the Cutler Mountain.

To the wild eagle's scream,
And the dashing fountain,
And the funeral pyre
Of lone Bessie Bounton,
A long farewell for
My soul mounting
Beyond the Cutler Mountain.

Up higher and higher,
And higher and higher,
Beyond the range of earth,
Beyond the shot and fire,
And ever on beyond
All craving and desire,—
Beyond the Cutler Mountain.

Beyond the night of death,
And ever still I'm tossed,
Beyond, and still beyond,—
And yet I'm not lost,
Beyond the Milky Way
Its hazy fields I've crossed,—
Oh, mine forever,—hallelujah!

In sight of the city,
In sound of the town,
With its golden streets
And its jewel'd crown,
The New Jerusalem
At last I've found,—
The eternal God, and Heaven.

ELSIE CLARK

A FLASH in the darkness,
A gleam in the dark,
A stranger to rashness,
A twittering lark,
Contending and mending,
And pleasantries sending,
Is Elsie, fair Elsie,
My own Elsie Clark.
My own Elsie, ever,
Of fair Eaton town,
Adjacent some rivers
Of lasting renown,—
The Platt, and the Pudre,—
And beautiful town,
The colony town
Of pioneer days.
Away at the sunrise,
By meadow and park,
As freely her fun flies
At every remark,
And smiling and tripping
As onward she's skipping,
Is Elsie, dear Elsie,
My own Elsie Clark.
But aye, from this village,
From which you may turn,—
This gem, and its tillage,
In sight of Lucerne,
And scenes, far removed
From early childhood,
To blessings awaiting
A pure motherhood;

O Elsie of Eaton,
  May time still unfold
A life that will sweeten
  With pleasures untold,
And ever dash onward
For life's noble mark,
My Elsie, sweet Elsie,
My own Elsie Clark!

THE LEAVES THAT FALL

Compute the grass upon the ground,
In all the fields here strewn around,
And every blade, it must come down,
And one by one, and one by one.
And one by one the leaflets fall,—
And one by one, and one by one
But in the end death takes them all,—
And one by one, and one by one.
And one by one the days go by,
And one by one, and one by one,
As do the stars that fill the sky,
And one by one, and one by one,
And one by one the years glide on,
And one by one, and one by one,
And ere we know they all are gone,
And one by one, and one by one.

THE PLEASANT WAY

The ways that wind are most unkind,
  The pleasant way is straight,
The tangled way's the mangled way,
  That many find too late.

The rudest way's the lewdest way,
And full it is of sorrow,
And all who stray along this way
May fear the coming morrow.
But pleasant ways and pleasant days,
They soothe the soul with pleasure,
And pluck the dart from every heart,
And leave a gladsome treasure.
Then let us live that we may give
To all some sweet affection,
And when we're gone we'll still live on
In fonder recollection.

ADVICE

To 'void the pangs of life's distress,
What, most of all, should one possess?—
What things that may be had by each,
What useful things within our reach?
Well, first of all, among this throng,
Each one should be extremely strong.
For out of this,—this root of Strength,
A host of branches spring at length,
And bud and blossom to amaze,
And show their worth in endless ways.
And of each branch that's pure and fair,
These should receive our constant care.
And Virtue here, she stands in front,
And naught should be allowed to stunt
The growth of this most godlike form
That might be warped by passion's storm;
And every care that thought can give
Should train it in the ways to live.

For what is strength, at any price,
If Virtue yields to passing vice?
And next to these, I find the Truth
That should be sought by every youth;
For Truth and Strength and Virtue are
The greatest things in life by far.
And search you may, but in these three
Man finds his earthly trinity.
And unto these all other things
Will turn their face, and spread their wings.
And Love herself is but the child
Of Strength and Virtue undefiled,
So all, and all, and all that be
Bow down before these sacred three.

DOROTHY BARFOOTE

'Way down along the Delaware,—
'Way down this shady thoroughfare,—
Wee's the maiden living there
  With her curls;
She's the fairest of the fair,
Golden ringlets in her hair,
Lightly tripping as the air,
  Like the squirr'ls.

With a temper few can rile,
So confiding is her smile,
She is laughing all the while
  On the grass.
She's a stranger unto guile,
And the sweetest little child
In the city, by a mile,
  That I pass.

At your playhouse, where you've played,
Down the brooklet in the shade,
Where you often went to wade,
  You may find
Deep impressions have been made,
By some lover down the glade,
That will never, never fade
  From your mind.

For some playmate, once so proud,
Now so meekly in his shroud,
Will be missing from the crowd
  Where you go;
Evening vespers tolling loud,
Empty spaces where he bowed,—
These may haunt you like a cloud
  In its flow.

But the darkness of your veil
And the sadness of your wail
And the windings of your trail,—
  These will pass,
Like the wreckage of the gale,
And your efforts that may fail,
And your beauty that will pale
  Like the grass.

You will learn, though, by and by,
Consolation's always nigh,
Ever frowning on the sigh
  Of the years,
Never trifle, asking why,
Floods of sunshine in the sky
Bring a twinkle to the eye
  Filled with tears.

Like the shadows on the street,
Youth's as transient as it's sweet,
Or the strangers that you meet
  On your way;
Blessings on your cottage neat,
And your dainty little feet,
In their movements ever fleet,
  Day by day.

Wisdom pineth for the sage,
Knowledge cometh after age,
Youth is but a barren page
  Newly born;
Often vexing in its rage,
But its future we may gauge
By its talents on the stage
  In the morn.

Beauty lieth in your ways,
Virtue addeth many days,
Subtle venom oft betrays
  With a kiss;
Shun the loafer with his gaze,
And the vulgar in the plays,
And a life that quickly slays,
  Little miss;

And the fickleness of dress,
With its signals of distress,
And all ruthless showiness,
  And you'll find,
In this restful simpleness,
Such a blissful happiness
In the easing of your breast,
  And your mind.

Modern follies often chase,
Swifter than the swiftest race,
Seeking stations, seeking place
  Day and night;
Some with motives that are base
Plainly stamped upon their face,
Others wanting as to grace
  In their flight.

What are vanities and pride,
More than pleasures crucified?
The indulgent may deride,
  But it's so;
All there is that's deified,
Only naturalness abides,
Else the ages all have lied,—
  Well we know.

Hasty tempers blight and rend,
Smiling faces always mend,
Love should triumph to the end
  Of your days;
With the volumes she has penned,
And the armies she can send,
May her empire still extend
These displays.

Modesty and gentle speech,—
These are always in your reach;
Like the pebbles on the beach,
  They are free;
What a sermon these could preach,
Bringing blessings unto each!
And a lesson they should teach
  All who be.

Elfin creature, pure and sweet,
There's a whisper down the street,
And it's flying awful fleet
  Through the air;
That the neighbors, when they meet,
Ere they even stop to greet,
Seem delighted to repeat,
  So beware!

All young ladies, they should know,
In life's struggles to and fro,
Many shadows come and go
  And expand;
And this fruitage, high and low,
All the planters, when they mow,
Are but reaping what they sow,
  As they planned.

You remember Dora Smock,
In her cottage down the block,
How she answered to a knock
  On her door?
It was midnight by the clock,
When she turned that fatal lock,
And they found her and her frock
  Smeared with gore.

Found her face,—and body, too,
Marred in death, and black and blue,
Gaping wounds, and not a few,
  Lay open wide;
Blood had gushed and spurted through
Her silk and satin garments new,
And she'd been a mother, too,
  Ere she died.

You remember Clarence Stife,
And the romance of his life,
How it was, they found his knife
  In her room?
She was once his noble wife,
Ere these whisperings were rife,
Long before this bloody strife
  Sealed their doom.

And you may yet remember still,
The chase and capture on the hill,
And that wild exciting thrill
  To old and young?
Down the river, near the mill,
Where the moaning waters spill,
And that being, mute and still,
  That they hung.

In our ropes of sand and slime,
Wound around the reels of time,
There are moments most sublime
  For us all;
In the shadows of the chime,
There are many in their prime
Who are ever plotting crime
  Ere they fall.

We have passions, when they're freed,
That we scarcely ever heed,
That can smash the strongest creed
  In the land;
And so ruthless is their greed,
Thoughtful parents always lead,
Nor should any stop to plead,
  But command.

Love's a stranger unto some,
Seeking respite in their rum,
They're as stagnant as the scum
  On the bog;
Timid mortals, partly dumb,
Crowd the counters of the slum,
While they mumble o'er a crumb,
  And their grog.

Dorothy Barfoote, time will wing,
Onward flowing like the spring,
And its echoes soon will ring
  Womanhood.
While the merrymakers bring
Garlands, from the queen and king,
May all nature round you sing,—
  As it should.

Quickly now, your star will rise,
Some fair Jupiter that lies
Deeply hidden, I surmise,
  From your sight,
Will be master of your sighs,
And be flooding all your skies
And the gladness of your eyes
  With delight.

Hark, this phantom draweth near,
That's been waiting year by year!
What its mission may be here,
  None can tell.
Sharper than the sharpest spear,
It's an object many fear,
For it often brings a tear,—
  And a knell.

Patience now, for love must grow,
Only older ones may know
How these throbbing symptoms flow,
As they drift,
Stormlike, in their sweeping blow,
Darting hither, to and fro,
Shot from Cupid's magic bow,
Keen and swift.

All who hearken to this god,
Ere they slumber 'neath the sod,
Are the valiant, who have trod
On before;
Many doubters slowly plod,
These are only smoothly shod,
So's the nodder, with his nod
And his snore.

Dorothy, in dreams by night,
Comes a picture, clear and bright,
Painted by some passing wight,
I suppose;
Yet, so agile is the flight
Of this tiny little sprite,
Oft he giggles with delight
Ere he goes.

In this picture I can see
Glimpses of futurity,
Some fine country, wide and free,
Spread around,
There's the cottage, 'neath the tree,
And its owners, he and she,
With their baby on their knee,
Neatly gowned.

Stretching onward down the lane,
On, and onward, yet again,
Homes of comfort dot the plain,
  Far and near;
Endless fields of tossing grain,
Ever billowing amain,
Guaranteeing ample gain,
  Year by year.

Stately forests, here and there,
Sparkling streamlets glint and glare,
Birds so happy fill the air
  With their song;
Nooks of beauty, jeweled rare,
Winding driveways everywhere,
Nodding flowers peep and stare
  All day long.

Here the creature meets his God,
Face to face in every clod,
And he loveth every rod
  Of the lea;
And he looks to this, the sod,
Like the mason to his hod;
Or the netter, netting cod,
  To the sea.

And look to this, this cup of cheer,
Along the lines of honor, dear,
And life, and love, without a fear;
Bide your time.
And brush aside this passing tear,
That too often lingers near,
And bright you'll find existence here,
  And sublime.

And down this Delaware, some day,
And down this thoroughfare, I lay,
And who he is, I dare not say,
With his ring;
As when your thoughts are far away,
Within the staging of life's play,
All laden down with flowers gay
He will bring,

Gladness to your longing heart;
And with a suitor's ardent art,
And for a promise, ere you part,
He will plead,
And the quivers of his dart,
And the beauty of his chart,
And the richness of his mart
You will heed.

Blessings now, I trust, will be
Boundless as the open sea,
And your spirit just as free
As the bird
In the branches of the tree,
Overflowing in its glee,
With some joyous melody,
That you've heard.

And in the years not far away,
When I'm feeble, old and gray,
I should love to rest some day
On your lawn,
Or go sailing down the bay,
While your children romp and play,
And for this I often pray,
Ere I'm gone.

SOMETIME

"Sometime in the hush of evening,
Sometime when the sun is low,
As when at last we are leaving
The swish of the harbor's flow;"
Sometime when our hearts are beating
More faintly, and faintly still,
Sometime when our life's retreating
Disorderly over the hill,
May there come to all that's mortal,
The glimpse of a brighter road
That leadeth unto a portal
Of some celestial abode!
And whether it be oblivion
Or life in a higher sphere,
For all, it's an endless heaven
That stealeth away our fear.

WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?

Some more money leaves our city,
Some more poverty at home,
Tell the mayor, sing the ditty,
Loud enough to startle Rome.

What's the matter with our people?
Why this begging for a job?
Poor as mice beneath the steeple
That another comes to rob.

Build some factories,—we can do it,—
Build a wall around our home,

If we don't, we'll surely rue it,
And they'll laugh at us in Rome.

See this long array of houses,
That stand empty on the hill.
And my blood within me rouses
When I see folks leaving still.

What's the matter with our city?
Who is gloating o'er her shame?
Aye, there's something more than pity
Needed to preserve her name.

All we have goes out to others;
Not a cent remains at home,
O my sisters and my brothers,
How we bow us down to Rome.

TO A DEAD FLY

And what is this that I behold,
Out here among this stinging cold?
Aye, this is death I'm passing by,
The ghostly form of some dead fly.
And yet of this, this painless form,
What cares it now about the storm,
Or howling winds that come and go,
Or biting frost and drifting snow?
And still, all this I'm passing by,—
All this was once a little fly.
And even now its wings are wide,
As oft they were before it died.
And yet, for truth, wee little fly,
In life I longed for thee to die,

But now I find you here to-day
As harmless as the trodden clay.
And like you seem a ball of frost,
Forever back and forward tossed,
And ever swinging in the storm,
Each day I pass your tiny form.
And often here what thoughts arise!—
Deep thoughts, to which no one replies.
And musings oft o'erwhelm my brain,
And hopes and fears, an endless train.
And what of all this tangled thought,—
And strange conjectures this has brought.
For since, as now, you're safe in death,
I often pause and hold my breath,
Or softly murmur, passing by:
"I, too, am but a helpless fly."
For yet, indeed, how may I tell
What all this is that once befell
So small a creature as you are,
That swings across my window bar?
And since thy fleeting life is gone,
And dissolution's sweeping on,
And every earthly pleasure's past
That once so strongly held you fast,
Before thy form, may I not bow,
In search of information now?
For this one query, often scoffed,
Has come to haunt my spirit oft,
And left me ever still aghast,
About the future and the past.
And what it is, I'd ask of thee,
To set my longing spirit free,
And bring to me a lasting bliss,
The query is, and that is this:
Had you a spirit like my own,
A spirit still to me unknown,

That death released in passing by,
Had you a spirit, little fly?
Ah, silent still?—as silent still,
As I shall be upon the hill.
And yet, sometime, poor little fly,
Let's hope together, you and I,
Sometime this screen will open wide,
On what as yet has been denied.
This weakness here, this timid part,
But this it is that makes us start,
And shivering stand amid the gloom
That hovers round our every tomb.
And since you're gone, may you repose
Beneath the fragrance of some rose,
And this may be beside my own,
Then we can rest in peace alone,—
In calm contentment as we lie,
Awaiting yet some by and by.
And once again, of thee out there,
Among this storm and frosty air,
Of thee I'd ask, poor little fly:
Ere yet alone you came to die,
Were you cast off by all your friends,
On whom our pleasure most depends,
And scoffed and scorned, as though a fool,
And made the butt of ridicule
By high and low, and every one
With whom you met beneath the sun?
If so, my heart goes out to you,
And ever bleeds, and bleeds anew.
And here, once more, I'd ask of thee
That was, and yet again may be—
For if it be a truth that's told,
By Darwin, back in ages old,
My race, and all it e'er may be,
Was once as slight as this I see—

So once again, before I turn
To other fields of less concern,
Again I'd ask, in passing by:
Had you a home in which to die,
A home, somewhere among your friends,
On which advancing age depends,
And pleasant hearth, and family ties,
On which the best of us relies,
Remaining still forever green,
Before you died upon this screen?
Or did you bid adieu to kin
And vow you'd ne'er return again?
If naught of this, I know not why
You sought this stormy place to die.
Or were you *shoo'd* from some warm room,
By mothers armed with kitchen broom,
Or slyly watched by toads and frogs;
And made the mark of snapping dogs;
Or switched about by every tail,
Just like the beating of the flail,
Until, with hatred thus imbued,
And that foul imp, ingratitude,
You spread your tiny wings at last,
And vowed you'd bury all the past?
If this it was, poor little fly,
So oft it is, when death is nigh,
Each one of us is apt to find
Ingratitude is most unkind.
And was it this that caused your plight
And plunged you in this wintry night,
And sent you weeping down the years,
A stranger unto all but tears,
Until in time, the climax came,
And let you die a death of shame?
If so, 'twere idle to deny,
These ruined hopes that round us lie

Bestrew the earth from age to age,
And laugh at us from every page.
And hard it were, if you, unknown,
Should find an obscure grave alone!
But all around you wrecks abound
That, like yourself, remain uncrowned.
And while we stand, and wait, and sigh,
The ends and aims for which we try
Are like the ship that sails away
From some transparent inland bay,
To breast the ocean's outer swell,
Whose fate, no one may ever tell.
So full of hope are all aboard,
So happy when the ship's unmoored,
So like to life, the whole world o'er,
And fog and mist and unseen shore,
And every reef, and every shoal,
That seeks to rob us of our goal.
As when we go, as when we go,
To where, alas, as when we go.
I'd give my heart, torn from my breast
If I for sure knew all the rest.
Yes, I'd give it freely, could I see,
Beyond this grave of mystery;
And yet it seems, nor you nor I
Can glimpse these things, poor little fly!

A PASSING WORLD

In vagueness here we struggle on,
  Among this gloom surrounding,
And look to this, the early dawn,
  As something most astounding.

But wait awhile, until our earth
More brightly grows in rising,
And this will show in ways of worth
A host of things surprising.

But when all this has reached its noon,
And swings toward its setting,
Mankind will weep a passing boon
Through ages of regretting.

For yet this earth on which we live
Must die as we are dying;
And back to Nature's God must give
These beauties round us lying.

And of all life that we behold,
Each tender cord must sever,
And silent lie, and stark and cold,
And slumber on forever.

For while our earth still blooms to-day,
She has not always bloomed,
And she must answer with decay,
And be herself entombed.

AVIS LINNELL

How proud is man, how sad his fall!
How keen is his disgrace,
How weak his plan, how black his pall,
How guilty seems his face!
How bleak his day, how dark his night,
With not a star above,

How weak his clay, how plain his fright,
  How fickle seemeth love!
How quick to stray, how keen to mar,
  How saintly seemed his face,
How prone to pray, but, oh, that scar
  No mortal can efface!
Some darling son, some mother's hope
  Of joy in after years,
His race is run, behold the rope,
  And faces shorn of tears!
He sleeps alone, who speaks his name,
  Whose pardon can he crave,
Who can atone, who bear his shame,
  Who weeps around his grave?

How bright her day, how fair her night,
  With starry hosts above,
How pure her clay, how soft her light,
  How constant seemeth love!
How near in death, how dear in life,
  How trusting, and how true,
How sweet her breath, how spurned as wife,
  And yet, she never knew.
She's sleeping, too, how calm her sleep,
  Out where the flowers bloom,
Among the dew,—where angels keep
  Their vigils round her tomb.
Some locks of hair, some father's pride,—
  His darling is no more;
So young, so fair, so crucified,—
  The one we all adore!

WAR

An heir to tribulation,
Man's battle-cry rings out
Across the fields of strife,
And lays its blighting hand
On every field and flower.
And soon, forgetting all
The sacred things of life,
And like a royal beast
Forth springing on his way,
He lays in utter waste
The cotter's humble home,
And gladly marches on
In quest of other lands.
And here, where motherhood
Is totally forgot,
And every finer sense
Is trampled under foot,
We find around us strewn
The evidences vast,
Of man's colossal shame.
And see these ruins here
Is where the village stood,
And yonder's wailing cry
Is from an orphan child.
And what about this child,
On which the hopes of all
Are based in after years,
And is it best it should
Be forced to stand and gaze
Upon this picture here,
And see its home in flames,
And call, and call aloud

For those protecting arms
A mother's care and love
Alone can ever give?
Away with all of this,
Away with those who claim
That human progress calls
For such a sacrifice!
But while this cot may rise,
And stand as once before
Above these ruins here,
And sweetly hum again
The avenues of trade,
This child will ever see
The horrors of a day,
When pestilence and war
A mighty havoc wrought
Around its peaceful home,
And left a picture stamped
Upon its youthful brain
That time cannot efface.
The years go by apace,
The child is now a man,
And drying all his tears,
He bows before his God
And makes a new resolve;
And hateful seemeth now
The peaceful walks of life.
Reared in the midst of strife
And desolated homes,
Throughout the coming years
Impatiently he waits
To stab his fellow-man.
And "War!" he shrieks aloud
To every passerby,
"I saw my parents die
Around their humble cot,

And from an orphan child
I've ever longed for this.
'Revenge! revenge!' shall be
My constant battle-cry
As long as life may last."

OUT FOR A RAMBLE

And what is this, that smites my ear,
And what are all these sounds I hear,
This *jabber, jabber, jabbering,*
And *buzz,* and *hum,* and flashing wing;
And endless calls, among the throng,
That ever sweep the ways along,
And leave impressions on the mind,
That some great ruler, wise and kind,
Hath deep implanted in the breast,
That all may be forever blessed?
For each of these, and every one,
They point toward the central sun.
And "I am God!" proclaims the tide,
"I swing across the oceans wide,
And rise and fall and rise again,
As lord of all its vast domain."
"And I am, too," proclaims the land.
"Behold, I bloom on every hand,
And send my fruitage far and near,
O'er all the earth from year to year."
"And I, as well," "And I," "And I,"
I heard ten thousand tongues reply,
Loud rumbling down the mountain side,
And dashing o'er the valleys wide,
And drifting sand, and stone and sod,
"And I, and I, and I am God!"

And none so great, and none so small,
But what this thought was left by all.
A portion here, a portion there,
The land, the ocean, and the air,
In life, or death, on every hand,
Or continents, or grains of sand,
Or wild green vales no foot hath trod,
They each one claim a part of God.
Or seek the sunbeam in its flight,
Or bow in awe before the night,
Or trail the comet in its course
Of frightful speed and doubtful force,
Or ask the bird about its song,
Or shrub, or tree, or creeping vine,
And all will tell you they're divine.

REBUKED

When I and my friend,—
That's my dinner-pail,—
Went tripping along
O'er the factory trail,
I noticed a man
Out walking alone,
With a heavy heart
And a troubled moan,
Bewailing his fate
In life's early noon,
When nearing his gate
One morning in June.
But never a mention
Concerning his health,
Or grief that follows
The passing of wealth;

For he owned the kine
  On the distant hills,
And promising mines
  And extensive mills,
And a mansion, too,
  That was famed afar,
In sight of the deep
  Blue ocean's bar.
And children, to humor
  His fatherly pride,
And a lovely wife,
  And estates beside.
And so vast were they,
  With scarcely a bound,
They encompassed the
  Whole of Cameron town.
But his face was drawn,
  And his look was sad,
And nothing to show
  That his heart was glad.
So I hid from sight
  As the man drew nigh,
For long I had sought
  For some reason why.
And now, he had stopped,
  And glancing around,
Again he was darting
  Away with a bound;
As quickly and straight
  As a homing bee,
To the cooling shades
  Of a linden tree.
And watching him closely,
  It was I that found,
That the man was digging
  A hole in the ground.

And lifting a vessel,
All battered and old,
I saw he was hiding
His glittering gold.
Then smoothing the soil,—
Never leaving a trace,
That any might ever
Discover the place.
And softly I murmured,
As he smoothed the sod,
"I've found the miser,
And the miser's god."
And while he was lying
Out under the shade,
Distinctly I heard the
Remarks that he made.
"And oh! for a million
That jingles so fine,
Have I sought and sought
With this heart of mine!—
Where the waves dash high
O'er the pathless deep,
And the storm-king howls
With a furious leap,
And ever preserving,
With factory and mine,
Have I sought and sought
With this heart of mine!
While happiness ever,
From others, I hear,
And pleasures are filling
The whole of the year,
Oh, wide, wide world
Overflowing with play,
And why is my heart
So heavy to-day?"

"I know," said a cricket
Along by the road,
"I know the sorrows
Of an idler's load,
For you snore out here
In the shade all day,
While others are toiling
Their lives away."
And then, from the sap,
That's feeding the leaf:
"And what an example
Of sadness and grief!
But I'm just as busy
As busy can be,
All over the earth
With meadow and tree,
And the fields, I give,
With their leaves unfurled,
The pleasures they find
In feeding the world."
"And there's Mother Jones
That lives down the road,"
Remarked an aged
And respectable toad,
"I was grieved, in passing
Her cottage to-day,
To find the old lady
Was out making hay.
And, ah, what a blessing,
If she had your gold,
Instead of your pouring it
Down in a hole!"
"And I," said the wren,
With quivering breast,
A-tug at some linten
For lining her nest,—

"Behold my contentment!
While laboring long,
Forever I'm singing
A twittering song."
And this from the ant
Out searching for food:
"And I know the cancer
That's poisoned your mood.
For, day after day,
While others may reap,
I find you out here
In the meadow asleep!"
And grabbing his nose,
He gave it a jerk,
Commanding the sluggard
To toddle to work.
"And hike!" said the bee
In hurrying flight,
"For I know the sweetness
Of labor's delight,
In gathering honeys
From meadow and lawn,
To nourish my babies
Long after I'm gone."
And while he yet lay,
She folded her wing,
And square on his lip now
She gave him a sting,
And this, while a robin,
Just in from the field,
With a worm in her beak
For the little one's meal,
Was thinking, no doubt,—
But never a tweet!
Examples are golden,
And silence discreet.

THE GODDESS OF HOPE

Among these ruins here
That all around us lie,
Hope, eternal hope remains,
Forever still the same.
And unto her it is,
No faithless need apply,
Or cravens ever come
With lamentations loud,
For, while the weaker fall
Aweary by the way,
As like the rifted rocks,
Immovable she stands,
And points to every one
The haven of repose.
And with a grasp and strength
Of changeless attitude,
She indicates the way,
That ever open lies
Amid the breakers round.
And like, she seems to be,
A mother unto all.
And with a mother's love,
She ever cries aloud
To every passerby:
"When honors take the wing,
And poverty comes by
And claims you as her own,
O weary, wandering man,
I bid you not despair
At fortune's luckless way,
But come and bow you down
Before my changeless throne,
And make a new resolve."

IN THE SPRING

When the sun shines bright
And the heat comes down,
And the grass peeps out
From the springtime ground,
"Ah, ha!" says the bat,
In his dungeon so deep,
As he yawns and he wakes
From a nine months' sleep,
"Ah, ha! for it's time
That all of us bats,
Were out on the wing
For some wee little gnats."
For the insect flies
And the wild birds sing,
And, oh, for the joys
Of an early spring!
And the harsh winds cease
And the days wax long,
And the sun moves north
As he grows more strong.
And the snow-birds leave
And the pewees come,
And a rumbling's heard
From the pheasant's drum,
And, oh, for a sounding
I long since knew,
When the grouse cocks crowed
Like a *boo woo oo!*
And the gophers all dug
In the black, moist earth,
And the world woke up
To a new-found birth.

And the earth seems glad
  When the sun shines bright,
And the storms pass by
  In their hurrying flight.
And the brooks glide on
  With a new-found glee,
And hustle and hustle
  In search of the sea.
And the cold lets up,
  And the rains come down,
And the sap leaps out
  From the warm moist ground.
And this is the time
  That we all should know,
When the buds swell out
  And the green leaves grow.
And the sun goes down,
  And the clouds look red,
And the tools come out
  From the farmer's shed.
For he's been abroad
  And he's strolled all around,
And he finds no frost
  Remains in the ground.
And away to the farms
  In the springtime thaw,
It's time for the seeds
  And the *gee! whoa! haw!*
Way down in the cornfields
  A-drilling in the grain,
All over the country
  There's millions again,
And it's, ho, for the wheat!
  And it's, ho, for the rye!
And it's *gee! whoa! haw!*
  As the days go by.

And it's *click-ity clack*
As the corn goes in,
For the corn's down low
In the old man's bin.
And the plowboys come
When the corn's all in,
And it's *gee! whoa! haw!*
All over again,
Till the corn's laid by
And the tools in store,
And the toilers are found
At their homes once more.
And here's to the farmer,—
And the one true king,—
When the ground thaws out
In the early spring!

THE MYSTERY OF MAN

In vague conjectures oft, it seems to me, from out the depths of space, discussing thus, there comes a low sweet voice. And now, from whence cometh man? For of his origin, like that of his destiny, as yet, it would appear, we may not know. And while the rocks declare there was a time when he was not; whether it be true or false, in some remote past, he found a lodgment here upon our swinging globe, the recipient, perchance, of converging congenialities: The rudimental offspring of some tropical paradise. But as to his sphere of action then, we can only conjecture now; and still it must have been, as it were, babes in the manger, helpless little babes, male and female, he and she.

But while the ages sped along, they grew, and they

waxed stronger and stronger day by day. And so it was in the course of time, they stood forth fully developed: he, a robust man, and she, a mature woman.

And then, in the fullness of their strength and maturity, they arose from their lowly state, and they dressed themselves in the rude leaves of the forest, and they went forth to view the beautiful things of the world, which all around them lay in rich profusion strewn,—in the crimson of the cloud, in the murmur of the stream, and the twinkling of the starry fields above. And they were greatly pleased with the prospects of life that lay before them. Lured on and on, as they were, by a love of adventure and the wonderful problems of creation, they wearied not in their quest for more and more happiness, until they had encompassed the uttermost ends of the earth.

And as they wander on, and yet forever on, to-day we find them lost among the fruitful vales, and on the morrow still continuing their way amid the stretches vast of some primeval wood. Like our children now, they gather as they go the flowers by the way. And here and there they pause, enraptured with the scenes that all around lie. Or touched with the pleading cries of some wild bird for its lost mate, they linger long in mutual pity oft.

But maturity has affections of its own, and it ever hopes, and it ever dreams of these. And while they passed along upon their journeying, they bethought themselves, and they sat them down to rest among the harmonious blendings of a primitive world, and they saw, and they speculated long upon the ways of life, and all its mysteries. And so it was, in the course of time, that they learned to love. And they embraced one another, and they became man and wife. And they sought out a beautiful location in the vales that lay around, and here they tarried long, and

they built for themselves a rude home in the wilderness, and they brought forth a family of children. And they went forth to labor in the various fields of human endeavor, and they wrought patiently throughout the short day that lay before them. And they made ample provision for themselves and their household. And when the evening came, aweary with the trials and tribulations of life, they robed themselves again in the cold soils of the earth, and they lay them down to sleep, in that long and peaceful slumber that we know not of.

And they were the kings of the earth, and they were the monarchs of the world. And they were the weavers, and they were the workers, in every country fair, and every land where man has made himself a home. And they were the beggars by the wayside, pleading for alms. It matters not, since all of these were of one flesh. And now they are gone; yes, the whole of them are gone forever. And those vast slabs of stone, that were hewn from the mountainside, and placed above their graves as a token of respect,—what has become of these? Do they still serve the purpose of their creation? No, verily; for all these have perished as they perished; and their very names, and their occupations, and their handiwork, that wrought and carved and built upon a thousand hills. And where may this be found? Alas, all this lies prostrate in the dust. And naught is there to-day to indicate that they ever were, save those of their progeny that they left behind them.

And of such is the mystery of man: his conception, his growth, and all that backward lies, and that which lies ahead, and mystifies the mind. And from his hiding-place he comes among us still, he comes as a helpless little babe, claiming our love, our sympathies, and our blessings. And he grows to manhood

among us; and he goes out into the world to look around him. And he takes unto himself a helpmate, and he lays his plans, and he begins to build. And whether it be the building of a home, the building of a city, or the building of an empire, it matters little. For should he make mistakes, that ruin all his plans, another comes along and finds a better way. And so he labors on until the evening comes, and then he lays aside his ledger or his pen, and calling for his friends, he bids them all adieu, and starts again upon that mysterious voyage from whence he came,—once more, as it were, a mere atom of dust, drawn from the inexhaustible nursery of the universe, to which he can neither add nor subtract. And so the ages pass along, the while we ever seek for more and more light.

But find it not.

A BORROWED TOOL

Muck like we are a tool to-day,—
  And this we only borrow,
And use a while along the way,
  And then return to-morrow.
An implement, as if it were,
  Belonging to our neighbor,
And constantly from year to year
  We lead a life of labor.
And with this tool we sow and reap,
  In many ways that's clever,
And weary, then, we fall asleep,
  And slumber on forever.

BROTHERS IN NATURE

One pleasant morn
A child was born,
  A helpless mite, and wee,
And that same morn,
Near by, was born,
  A tiny little tree.
And from their birth,
The air and earth
  Upon them ever smiled,
For God, maybe,
He loves the tree
  As dearly as the child.
And so these two
Together grew,
  That had an even birth,
And this one throve,
And that one strove
  To beautify the earth.
And while the child
That cooed and smiled
  Grew up to be a man,
This tiny tree,
As all could see,
  Continued to expand.
The years went by,—
I don't know why
  The man should die so soon,—
For all can see,
It's not the tree
  That brings the greatest boon.

And yet, maybe,
This guileless tree,
  But kept abreast with God,
And never rent
His covenant,
  Commanding it to plod.
But who would be
A forest tree,
  Unnoticed in its falling,
To die, and rot,
And be forgot?—
  The very thought's appalling.

OLD DAPPLE GRAY

Dim lies the scene, old Dapple Gray,—
Dim lies the scene, and far away,
As when a child I used to play
  Around thy carriage wheel.

And since you're gone, old Dapple Gray,—
And since you're gone, time's slipped away
Until I find myself to-day
  Like thee of other years.

And with thee, too, has gone thy post,
Where grandpa used to hitch thee most,
And where so oft I've heard him boast
  Thy noble qualities.

And e'en the barn, that held thy stall
And tiny crib along the wall,
All these have passed, for buildings tall,—
  The Galoway Hotel.

Yes, things have changed, old Dapple Gray,
Since oft I stopped along the way,
To pat thy neck, and feed thee hay,
Upon my way to school.

And all is new along the street,
Where throngs go by with flying feet,
And all the ones with whom I meet
Are strangers unto me.

As well thy pasture o'er the hill,—
That grandpa left me in his will,—
Where all was once so hushed and still,
There's naught but memories.

But like thyself, old Dapple Gray,
Each one of us is mostly clay,
And all, ere long, must pass away,
To mingle with the soil.

THE CLIFF DWELLERS

Behold these relics of a race
That lived so long ago,
That time has blotted every trace,
Like footprints made in snow.

Here are the fragments of a man,
And there, a winding-sheet,
While science comes to search and scan
Along the silent street.

And now,—so long it seems to-day,—
The centuries have fled,
That man can never brush away
The mystery of the dead.

And of the relics that I saw,
  Not one is used to-day.
Thus progress vindicates her law,
  Since Mangus passed away.

Locked in the mountain's granite heart,
  Their key was hidden well,
By those who came and played their part,
  And vowed they'd never tell.

And histories may yet be writ
  About this race that's lost,
And vague imaginations flit,
  With reveries embossed.

But all that we may ever know,
  Is supposition now,
While yet the seasons come and go,
  Or why, or when, or how.

Except we see, in ages gone,
  A people who have flown,
Before this intellectual dawn
  Used hatchets made of stone.

And here the river flowed for them,
  And here the babe was born,
Among these mortars, precious gems,
  That ground their Indian corn.

And we, like they, some day may lie
  Dim hidden on the shore,
And men may come and search and try
  Our history to explore.

Our cities, too, like theirs, may be
  Dim fragments of the past,
Engulfed by Time's remorseless sea,
  In mystery at last.

And where God's acre stands to-day,
  And memories still bloom,
Profaning hands may come and lay
  Their clutches on our tomb.

THE UNKNOWN

To fathom all there is of unresponsive man,
And lay before the world his skeleton of thought,—
A mighty task it seems, of endless magnitude;
But when we come to that which lies beyond the
    range of mortal vision here,—
How vain must ever be our searching after this!

GOING BACK HOME

'Twill broader make the mind, I know,
  And lighter make the rod,
To feast upon the scenes once more
  Our youthful feet have trod.
'Twill bring a gladness to the heart,
  And brighter make the eye,
And flush the face with youth again
  That's swiftly passing by,
To stroll out o'er the meadow lands
  And listen to the lark,
And hunt for names among the woods
  We cut upon its bark.

And seek again the dear old farm
  Where once we felt so proud,
As when we drove our team afield
  And like a farmer plowed.
And many things I know will be
  As dear to me as when
A child I sat in wonderment
  And listened to the wren.
The finest mansion on the hill
  Is but a pile of stone,
Compared to simple cottages
  Our early life has known.
And clods along the country roads
  That bruised our tender feet
Are still more dear to us by far
  Than any city street.
We see the oak, outspreading wide,
  The sugar tree and lin,
And all around an endless train
  Comes flocking back again.
My trunk and I are on the train.
  The gold that gilds the dome,—
With pleasure, this I leave behind,
  To greet my youthful home.

THE SOURCE

Be careful, friends, whate'er you do,
For thought can make, or ruin, you.
For serpentlike, these often wind
Themselves around a passive mind,
And all night long, and day by day,
This thought may come, and steal away
The strongest efforts of the brain,
And bind them with an iron chain.

And while your reason may rebel
In bursts of passion for a spell,
This fact remains forever true:
A thought can make a beast of you.
And all the things you ever wrought,
They're but an echo of your thought,
And if you trace them back again,
You'll find them hidden in your brain.
And so, it's plain enough to see
How thought can make or ruin thee.
And since all this is doubtless true,
There but remains one thing to do,
'Tis this: To seek and try to find
The bent that warps a passive mind.
And where it's crooked, make it straight
With blows of giant moral weight.
And like to this, each one is built,
With deeds of love, or deeds of guilt,
And all he's done, his acts proclaim,
With honors great, or lasting shame.
So here we find the saint or knave,
With monument, or Potter's grave,
Far strewn around on every hand,
Among the tombs of every land.
"And why," says one, "why so unkind,—
That e'en in death I cannot find
For these old bones a resting-place,
But what they point to my disgrace?"
Ah, here's the answer,—forceful, plain:
"The trouble lies within your brain."
Then say not this, of thy right hand:
"If thou hadst wrought as I had planned,
I might have swept the earth amain,
Instead of this regretful stain."

MY DAILY PRAYER

My God, if I should stray from thee,—
  Or rather, from thy changeless laws—
Ope wide my thought, that I may see
  Thy goodness still in every cause.
In all there is that doth unfold,
  Not written down in doubtful books,
But hills and vales that I behold,
  And tidal waves, and gliding brooks.
And let me see through all these things,
  I may commune with Thee above,
Without so much as angel wings,
  To gain Thy everlasting love.
That I may be the more inclined
  Thy priceless counselings to heed,
Make strong my feet, and train my mind
  Away from life's remorseless greed.
For Thou hast made me what I am,
  And given me this heart's desire,
And should I stray, as like a lamb,
  From pastures green into the mire,
My God, wilt Thou not call me back,
  Among thy flowery fields below,
And point me out just what I lack,
  And all that I should ever know?
That I may learn, while I behold
  Thy wonders still without surprise,
Thou dost alone through these unfold
  Before the gladness of mine eyes.
And teach me, God, the ways of life
  Are simple as the passing stream,
If I but shun all hate and strife,
  That lie outside Thy blessed scheme.

And when, sometime, Thou callest me hence,
To where as yet I may not know,
My God, preserve my confidence
I'll find Thee still where'er I go.

THE GREED OF ONE MAN

O ye nations, warring nations,
While your clang of battle swells,
Down at Verdun, patient Verdun,
And the distant Dardanelles,
With your scheming and your plan,
What wrecks you make of puny man.
But louder than your booming cannon,
Intonating far and wide,
Comes a voice of wrath commanding:
"Step aside, sir, step aside!"
And you, you monster, born of woman!
And you, you demon, drunk with pride!
Why, you're not decent, you're not human,
Step aside, sir, step aside!
And you who pray for peace and plenty
And you who praise your foolish brave,
Still driving children under twenty
Downward to a horrid grave!
And you, and you, who love to plunder,
Applying still your greedy art
And smile at countries torn asunder,
To gratify a selfish heart.
And you, the horror of the nations,
And you, whose scheming all behold,
And you, and all your damned relations,
You're most the dastard in the fold.

AT THE FRONT

Through faith it is we see beyond
The pale of human thought,
One glimpse, and, lo! a brilliant dawn
Forth stands before us wrought.

THE TWIG THAT'S BENT

Who bent this twig that's grown so big
From such a small beginning,
Who, like some storm, has crushed this form
For yet another's sinning?

Or has some knife thus made its life
A wonderful contortion,
More hideous with cursedness,
Than ever was abortion?

Nay, nay! this bent was merely sent
To one and all, a teacher,
To show the love of God above
For every normal creature.

For all that's wrought, some one has brought
This unoffending cripple,
From whence, to-day no one can say,
Beyond his mother's nipple.

But down the line, some poisoned tine
Has left this germ of sorrow,
That reaps and mows and onward flows
As swiftly as an arrow.

And this is law, without a flaw,
  And not a soul should court it,
Nor is there one beneath the sun
  That ever should support it.

If so, this sting will surely bring
  An awful retribution,
And while it's rife a purer life
  Appears the sole solution.

So while we grope, there seems no hope
  Of gaining its removal,
And all He meant by what He sent
  Should meet with our approval.

Perfection seems the Master's dream,
  He culls and culls forever,
And seeks and longs among the throngs
  Beyond his sacred river,

A perfect race of form and face,
  From each and every nation,
And thus, through man, He yet may plan
  More wonders of creation.

HAD I A WING

Had I a wing, that I might fly
  To that fair shore,
Where life lives on, and none may die
  For evermore;

Had I this wing, this tireless wing,
  Of spread and might,—
This wing of strength,—that I might bring
  To reach the light;

This spirit wing, I pray, O Lord,
  This wing of hope,
This blessed wing and great reward
  Of boundless scope!

If I but find this long-sought wing
  Of endless sweep,
I'll rest me here and lie, and sing
  My heart to sleep.

THE FAIRY

No. II

PART I

One evening in the summertime,
When all around me seemed sublime
With sweet perfume the flowers lend,
And varied pleasures that attend
To wean the mind from earthly love,
And center it on things above;
I sought once more my old armchair,
Within my shady arbor, where
My mind is more responsive still,
Unto the musings of my will.
But soon, so pleasant was the air,
I fell to nodding in my chair,
Until I thought that some one spoke,
And then, I suddenly awoke,
And glanced around beneath the tree,
But nought was there, that I could see.
Some prank, perhaps, as oft before,
And here I sought my latticed door,

And called my wife, but she was gone,
And then again I slumbered on.
But ere it was I slumbered long,
I woke again with something wrong.
And now a-flutter, like a bird,
Around my head I thought I heard,
And still, I sat,—still as a mouse,—
Maybe a burglar's in the house,
And slyly here, I climbed the stair,
But all was silent everywhere.
"A dream," said I. No voice I heard,
Nor e'en the flutter of a bird.
Some passing fancy touched my brain,
So back I went to sleep again.
But ere I had commenced to snore,
I found myself aroused once more.
And now, my eyes I opened wide,
And just before me there, I spied
The sweetest, cutest little thing,
That moved before me like a swing.
And crossed my vision left to right,
And kept advancing in its flight,
A moment thus, in drawing near,
And then, as quickly disappear.
But soon I'd hear a tiny hum,
As back in place again it come.
And every movement of its flight
Convinced me that it wished to light.
And, repeating this, it came so close
That I could touch it now, almost.
But this was not my wish or will.
Meanwhile it kept advancing still,
For shorter now, and yet more slow,
Its arc of flight began to grow,
And kept advancing cautiously,
Until it lit upon my knee.

A fairy! Yes, the sweetest thing
That ever raised a tiny wing.
And standing thus before me there,
Its presence hallowed all the air,
So grand it was, although so small,
It seemed to tower over all.
A spirit of the grand and good
Before me now serenely stood,
And bowing low, it softly said:
"I bring no tidings from the dead,
But rather to a world of life
Contending still in endless strife."
And I, in turn, I bowed my head,
And said I'd write what e'er was said,
And seated now upon my thumb,
I wrote his message as it come.

PART II

"To all who live, and breathe and know,
Desire comes, to high and low.
And I'd be God, if I but could,
Just as I know all fairies would.
For all of us still hope to rise
To heights where greater wisdom lies;
Yet, I grudge not my Master's name,
Nor do I seek for vulgar fame,
But merely what all creatures should,—
A greater field for greater good.
And then, through space extending wide,
I'd draw all men unto my side,
And tune the soul of every man
To vibrate with the Master's plan.
And, possessing now this godly part,
I'd put a song in every heart,

And they who weep and they who moan
Should see my city and my throne,
For I should draw the veil aside
And show them what the Lord's denied.
For why should I remain concealed
Behind some starry, vaulted shield,
While all who wear this robe of flesh
Remain enthralled in such a mesh?
Yes, were I God I'd show my face,
And point to my abiding-place,
And help the weaker ones to rise,
And wipe the tears from others' eyes;
And some, I'd smite them with my rod,
And point them to the living God,
Or, better still to show my worth,
I'd build a hell right here on earth;
And every rascal boasting sin
I'd run him down and throw him in,
And let him perish, as he ought,
For all the meanness he has wrought.
It seems so long and far away
For one to wait the Judgment Day,
That men forget the Master's plan
By which he thought to govern man,
And yet He sits upon his throne
While all this devilment is known,
And still defers what now should be
Till some remote eternity.
My God, to Him I often say,
Whene'er I kneel me down to pray,
Canst Thou not see that which is done
By him who forward leads the Hun,
And tears our sacred temples down
To save the passing of his crown?
And this I've said before his throne,
But I'm so small and scarcely known

The Lord but motions me aside,
For other ones more deified.
For see, I move from star to star,
And note conditions as they are;
But when I would these things report,
The Lord, He spurns me out of court,
And says: 'Begone, you little sprite!'
And scoffs and scorns with all His might.
True, He made all this, as well He should,
And when He made them, all were good,
But should He see these things to-day,
He'd wonder at them long, I lay.
And once of late I sought His court,
Extremely anxious to report,
For I had learned of many things
That flew like thought on tireless wings,
O'er vast dominions that I found
Extending all the world around,
In hidden chambers, where I went
On secret information bent,
I heard the arrogant and proud
Belch forth their torrents long and loud,
With trembling form and features pale
That made the weaker members quail.
And war it was for which they planned,—
A war embracing every land,
But God said: "No; let's wait awhile,
And see what comes of it, my child."
Had I been He, I'd do something
With this vain braggart of a king.
And smaller ones who sought to shirk
Have sent them toddling off to work,
And all who dared oppose my laws,
I'd stop right there and crack their jaws.
This building cities all around,
While others come and tear them down,

When marching millions take the field
To stab and maim with clashing steel!
I tell you what, I'd show my hand
To all the world in every land.
Go back along the flight of time,
And view with me the awful crime
That's laid in ruins, from their birth,
The fairest countries of the earth,
In answer to some jealous cause
In conflict with the Master's laws.
Think you I'd wait a single hour,
If I were He, and had the power,
Nay, nay, indeed! I'd leave such drones
At best a heap of bleaching bones.
It makes me shudder when I think
How this one monarch loves to drink
The vitals from an only son,
Whose manhood yet has scarce begun.
And well I know, had I my way,
I'd stop this hollow mockery,
And ere I slept, I'd lay a scheme
On every ocean, bay, and stream,
And sink these monsters all so deep,—
They'd find down there eternal sleep!
Nor should they float, and drill, and train
A single battleship again,
And every gun, and every sword,
And every fortress that's adored
Along the coast, to guard the town,
I'd go right off and tear them down,
That men might smooth the fields again
And sow them down with golden grain.

PART III

"I know of life, that prayer's a part,
For prayer brings comfort to the heart,
And hope is sweet, though hope should be
Enthroned within life's mystery.
But strange it seems that any one
Should pray for peace that knows the Hun;
And if I could, this very day,
I'd change all this without delay,
And crush the Hun, and order peace,
And watch all happiness increase
In every land beneath the sun,
As should have been since time begun.
I've heard these prayers through endless years,
Poured forth amid a flood of tears,
In ruined homes where mothers beg,
And yet the Lord won't move a peg;
And why He's thus, there is a cause
That's found within his changeless laws,
And when I plead with Him to stop,
Else faith in prayer may lag and drop,
Till Bibles mold upon their shelves
And men rely upon themselves,
Absorbed in thought, I've heard Him say,
'Remember well the Judgment Day.'
And yet, from what I've heard, alas!
From invocations as I pass,
When battles hang upon the brink,
'Most every one would surely think
The Lord had taken full command
Of all the armies in the land.
One nation sees Him in the lion,
Another hears Him on the Rhine.

Flung to and fro, from hand to hand,
I hear His name in every land,
And yet, such devilment prevails
That wreck and ruin never fails,
To leave behind the orphan's cry
That melts to tears the strongest eye.

PART IV

"If men could see, as each one should,
The rich rewards for all that's good,
And see as well the punishment
For every law that's ever rent,
What shouts would ring from shore to shore!
And men would praise Him evermore!
If not for joy, they'd fear His rod,
And all would join in praising God.
And hate would die, and love would grow,
And happiness would onward flow
As if it were a mighty stream,
And man would realize his dream
Of peace on earth, for all mankind,
Just as the Master has designed;
And smiles would brighten every face,
And enmity would bow to grace;
And such a pleasure life would be
From age to age,—eternally.
And caste and cruelty, I'm sure,
Would slink away from every door,
And all that's beautiful and good
Would flourish as it ever should,—
For all God's creatures, great and small,
A heritage for one and all.
But now, instead of what should be,
Just look around yourself and see

The awful carnage that is wrought,
Because, forsooth, some one has taught,
That certain rulers in their line,
Though heartless scamps, are still divine,
And have a right to kill and maim
Without the slightest show of shame,
While all this loss, and strife and blood,
Rolls onward like a mighty flood,
Which but the exercise of thought
Could in a moment bring to naught,
The greatest monster time has known
To occupy an earthly throne!
And yet the Lord still trots his leg,
And vows He'll never move a peg.

PART V

"And now, maybe, I've been too fast,
For I recall a frightful past,
When God had troubles of His own,
To guard against around His throne.
And Satan's still a menace there,
The same as every other where.
In ages gone, I tell you what,
He laid a dark and cunning plot,
And marshaled all the imps of hell,
And fought with God, until he fell,
Leastwise, He bound him up so tight,
And hurled him out amid the night,
That he remains until this hour,
A shadow but of former power.
So God may be, for aught I know,
More busy yet than men below.
So much to watch, so much to do,
In watching imps, and watching you!

For not alone upon your earth,
Is sorrow found supplanting mirth,
But everywhere that life is found
The hopes of men are still uncrowned.
For all of these, the same as this,
Have sought in vain for mortal bliss,
And rise and fall, and rise again,
As do the waves upon the main.
In some fair land a nation's born,
And hope springs forward like the morn,
A city's built along the stream,
A great metropolis, a dream
Of boundless beauty, rich and great,
A monument for any State!
And miles and miles, o'er templed hills,
The lap of wealth her grandeur spills,
And leaves behind a sea of domes,
That mark the sight of peaceful homes.
And gorgeous treasures here are found,
Where endless pleasures still abound,
In marble mansions, rich and rare,
Where vibrant music fills the air.
And then—But, hark! Whence comes this
sound,
That low sweet music has not drowned?
The hopes of peace, the distant gun,
The battle's lost, the battle's won,
The shouts of men, the mote, the mine,
The long dark circling battle-line,
And crumbling wall, and lurid flame,
And dying prayer, and, oh, the shame!
That God should still be ever nigh,
And lets a helpless nation die!
I go my way, and soon return,
The city's gone, and then I learn

Invading armies tore it down,
And left its ruins on the ground.
But why enlarge upon the scene,
For all must know just what I mean?
And this goes on from year to year,
The same as you are doing here,
Like some wild charger, roughly shod,
In all the universe of God.
And here the beautiful and good
Are used as common kindling wood;
And treasured art and holy shrine
To these rude heathens less divine
Than clods that tumble through the air,
And fall beneath the tiller's share.

PART VI

"And now, in time, should this prove true,
That God has all that He can do,
Don't trembling stand, like little elves,
But build your hopes upon yourselves.
Too many wait for some one else,
And look upon their grievous welts
As retribution from on high
Some one has left in passing by.
And yet, our God hath ample grace,
And this is held for every race,
That closer yet, and closer draws
Itself around His changeless laws.
And hope and faith that mortals claim,
All this should still remain the same,
For these are gifts from Him above,—
As tokens of His endless love.
But wrath and war and greed and lies
Are things that heartless men devise.

And often these are so construed,
Among the ignorant and crude,
That declarations made by men
Are those of God revised again.
And now, I'm gone, my mission leads
To other world that vainly pleads
For that which you are asking here,
In many lands, from year to year.
For these, like you, have ever sought,
But all their search has come to nought;
For still they slaughter, maim, and kill,
The same as you are doing still,
Because some monster, like your own,
Sends forth an edict from his throne,
Outraging all that's just and good,
In youth, and age, and motherhood,
And piles with ruins every land,
To sate the avarice of man.
But when I come this way again,
I trust I'll find an endless train,
Commingling with the Master's plan
In one vast Brotherhood of Man.
And glad I'll be to hear the shout
That all good men have brought about,
For things like these, which so defile,
Must have an ending after while,
If not, you'll backward go again,
To caves of rock and hairy men."

THE PALACE QUEEN

Will you sip with me, my dearest,
  Will you take a bit of wine?
It seems to me, insipid tea
  Is nowhere near so fine.

Variety, I've heard it said,
Is near the spice of life,
And lovers still may taste at will,
As well as man and wife.

I've found a place, the finest place
Of any one I know,
Where pleading sighs expect replies.
My dearest, will you go?

The Palace Queen's this mansion is,
The passing eye to please,
Her lawns are clean and fresh and green,
And stately are her trees.

Just like a home, it seems to me,
Where friends are always near,
And no one rude, may there intrude,
To listen, and to hear.

With Oriental draperies,
Her rooms are curtained fine,
And every room is all a-bloom,
For callers taking wine.

Her lights glow softly all night long,
Her pictures on the wall,
They seem to walk and laugh and talk
And beckon unto all.

And all there is, it gleams afar,
Profusely strewn around,
The stairs you mount are like the fount,—
The envy of the town.

Here wealth and beauty boweth low
Resplendent with the gem,

And maid and gent, on pleasure bent,
Are every one of them.

And low sweet music floats away
Voluptuously grand,
And bow and string their magic fling
Out from a master's hand.

Will you sup with me, my dearest,
Will you take a bit of wine?
'Twas Paul, you know, who told us so,—
And he was near divine.

WHY NOT?

I've seen the flowers bloom and die,
And endless seasons passing by,
But these are naught to me, and why?
You need not ask, you need not ask.
For of them all I've no concern.
Then why should I a moment yearn,
When all and all, they soon return,
And start again, and start again?
And Venus there, I've seen her pass,
Like stubble oft, or withered grass,
But never once I've said: "Alas!"
For she returns, and still returns.
As well, the waves that leave the shore
When storms arise and billows roar,
For these come back and foam and pour
From day to day, and day to day.
Then, why not man, when he is gone,
Return again to greet the dawn,
And cycle on, and cycle on,
And on and on, and on and on?

FAITH

Oh, be patient, my soul,
And it won't be long!
For it's *tick, tick, tick,*
And it's *gong, gong, gong,*
Till some grave will close
With a farewell song,
Like others who've gone before.

Let the trembling earth
And the mountains quake,
And the clouds grow dark
And the wild storms break,
I shall rest as serene
As some placid lake,—
A drop in the boundless matrix.

Sustained by a faith
That never shall fail,
I'm weighing my anchor
And trimming my sail,
Preparing to weather
The crash of the gale
That girdles the ocean of time.

So, be patient, my soul,
And it won't be long
For this *tick, tick, tick,*
And this *gong, gong, gong,*
Till this grave will ope'
With a welcoming song,
And hail, hail the glad day!

HELLO! IN THE MORNING

When I woke up one morning late,
And turned me o'er in bed,
I gently rubbed my eyes a bit
And then it was I said:
"Why, hello, Bill!" and "Hello, Bill!
And hello in the morning!"

Now Bill, you see, was fast asleep
O'er in another bed,
But straightway now he roused himself,
And unto me he said:
"Why, hello, Ted, and "Hello, Ted!
And hello in the morning!"

And then we two together sang,
Each one about his girl,
And while I sang for Mary dear,
He sang about his Pearl,
"Why, hello, May," and "Hello, Pearl!
And hello in the morning!"

And when we to our breakfast went,
Selecting each a chair,
We knelt, and while he prayed for Pearl,
I prayed for Mary, fair,
"God bless my May!" and "Bless my Pearl!
And bless them in the morning!"

And with our ladies seated there,
Before we ate our bread,
We sang again for Pearl and May,
And they, for Bill and Ted.
"God bless my Bill!" and "Bless my Ted!
And bless them in the morning!"

THE LADY I LOVE

THERE'S a look on the face of the lady I love,
And a gleam in her dark blue eye,
Exalting my hopes unto heaven above,
And will be till I die,
And will be till I die, I know,
And will be till I die! —
Exalting my hopes unto heaven above,
And will be till I die.

And the flow of her hair's like a beautiful river,
When soft gentle wavelets go murmuring by,
And Edith, fair Edith, I'm loving thee ever,
And shall be till I die,
And shall be till I die, I know,
And shall be till I die!—
And Edith, fair Edith, I'm loving thee ever,
And shall be till I die.

And the hearts of us both they are beating together,
And soul unto soul ever maketh reply,
Like a storm breaking wild o'er the low-lying heather,
And will be till we die,
And will be till we die, I know,
And will be till we die.
Like a storm breaking wild o'er the low-lying heather,
And will be till we die.

Then out on some hill that is silent and rounding,
When the bright lights fade and the night comes by,
I shall find here a peace that is ever abounding,
If you are resting nigh,
If you are resting nigh, my dear,
If you are resting nigh!—
I shall find here a peace that's ever abounding,
If you are resting nigh.

TRUE RELIGION

If you would know my inmost heart,
Seek not for this among my creeds,
For these are but a puny part,
Comparing with my daily deeds.
Then while I live, close watch me, friends,
And count my creeds as so much show,
For on my deeds all hope depends,
And in the end you'll surely know.
Yes, then you'll know just what I am,
If close you scan my hate and love,
And if I'm one, I'm fit to damn,
The other seeks a home above.
For creeds are cold and formal things,
And made to bend and twist about,
And often weak, and full of stings,
All strewn along our earthly route,
Then go and search the human heart,
And nail your faith to this alone,
Nor seek outside, for any part
That ever may for this atone.
Atone for that which I may lack,
While pointing to my written creeds

Instead of pay, and paying back
  In honest coin and noble deeds.
For God will not accept a prayer
  Of one who takes the smallest mite,
And mark it down, and call it fair,
  And smile approval with delight,
Unless we pay for all our deeds,
  The rightful measure of their worth,—
No matter how, or what we plead,
  Before we bid adieu to earth.
Then live this life, whoe'er thou art,
  A life of justice, true and kind,
And gain that gladness of the heart
  That elevates the human mind.

THE ORCHARDS OF OUR YOUTH

Here lies the place far sweeter than
  Creation ever flung
O'er hill or vale, or mountain peak
  To fascinate the young!
This orchard site that once we knew,
  Far strewn around so grand,
How feeble now is all that's left,
  As like this trembling hand!
The willow twig and jonathan,
  The rambo and the spy,—
Oh, how the heart went out to these,
  In other days gone by!

For this is where we often went
  Ere we began to roam,
And sought afar, in distant lands,
  To build ourselves a home.

And here we've left our labors oft,
  Our appetites to please,
And out we've gone a-strolling far
  Among these dear old trees,
The winesap and the tallman sweet,
  The harvest and the green,—
In longings oft the mind swings back
  To this remembered scene!

But few to-day are left within
  Our orchards o'er the hill,
And e'en our father's rustic cot
  Deserted lies and still.
But here and there some roots are found,
  That speak of times gone by,
And yonder, prone upon the ground,
  A number of them lie:
The pairmain and the romanite,
  The domini and straw,
In answer, these have bowed them down
  To God's eternal law.

And farewell, then, to all of you
  In meekness strewn around,—
Till we shall meet us once again,
  A-slumber in the ground!
And let us trust, this slumbering
  Is but another day,
Where age may not intrude herself
  With blighting and decay.
The russet, and the maidenblush,
  The cider and the june,
And Lord, we pray, and hope to find,
  That death is but a boon!

A FOUNDLING

A STORM came out of the great northland,
And it moaned as it sadly tossed
A picture of death, with its frosty hand,
To a wee little baby lost.

"It's only a foundling," said one passing by,
"It's only a foundling frail.
Why bother myself? for soon it will die,
There's many another for sale."

And the night was dark, and the winds were cold,
And the snow lay deep on the ground,
And sad is the story, this story of old,—
When a wee little baby is found.

And the barking dog, and the *queaking* gate,
And a long, loud rap on the door,
But the house rose not, for the hour was late;
And the storm swept on as before.

Then a cry was heard, but they spoke no word,
As it echoed through parlor and hall,
And, with entrance denied, the little one cried,
In the folds of its coddling shawl.

And now from a form, that outran the storm,
There was heard a long wail of pity,
As the great trees bent and the Storm King sent
A mournful dirge o'er the city.

We all are foundlings that some one has brought,
To soften the bite of the storm.
Then open your door, another has taught,
And rescue some frail little form.

PROMPTNESS

Don't wait till to-morrow!
To-day is the time,
The future may sorrow,
The present's sublime.

Be prompt to the minute,
And throttle delay,—
As swift as the linnet
Aflit by the way.

For promptness is ever
The queen of the land,
And nothing can sever
The grip of her hand.

So wishing and waiting
Is time thrown away,
When courting and mating,—
To-day is the day.

For night bringeth slumber,
And dreams may invade
And hamper and cumber
The plans that are laid,

And change to illusions
Before it is day
A mix of confusions,
In passing away.

HERE AND THERE

While man remaineth here,
His pleasures and his pains
Are things within himself;
But when he goes away
And hides among the dust,
Another comes along
And shapes his destiny.

A WHISTLING FARMER

When out along the road one day,
I heard a whistling farmer say:
"I bow before my growing corn,
And wheat and oats, at eve and morn,
And thank the Lord for what he's sent;
And then I feel that sweet content
That farmers yet more often feel
When bowing down before their meal.
And when its o'er, my folks all sing,
And I start out, a-whistling,
To see if all the stock are fed,
And every horse has got his bed.
And pat old Charley on his jowl,
And lead him out and let him roll,
And watch the gay old fellow prance
Among the fillies, Nell and Nance,
And hail my porkers in their sty
That watch me when I'm passing by.

And play awhile with Dolly's colt,
And see the little rascal bolt
Way o'er the hill, around the spring,
And then come back a-whinnying.
I visit all the pigs and sows,
And sheep, and lambs and calves and cows;
And while they close around me crowd,
It makes my heart feel awful proud
To see the pleasures I must bring,
Whene'er they hear me whistling.
For loud they bleat, and bawl and neigh,
When I go strolling down the way,
Until the leaders call a halt,
And turn to look me o'er for salt,
Or lumps of sugar that I bring,
When strolling out at evening.
And all around me here they come,
These friends of mine, although they're dumb,
And circling close, they hem me in,
And watch, and wait, and plead again,
Until I pacify them all,
By some familiar act or call.
For I've some dainty for each one,
That I bestow before I'm done,
And call their names, and whisper low
Some words of love before I go.
And while I ever kindly speak,
I pat them gently on the cheek
Before I'm strolling on my way,
To call again another day.
And what a pleasure this can bring,—
I answer all by whistling.
Across the meadow lands, away
Where bunnies in the evening play,

Along the babbling of the rill,
That leads me down to Clayton's mill,—
Where pike are wont to leap and snap,—
To take a look at Bennie's trap,
And see if everything is right,
To lure the fish throughout the night.
And when I find that all is well,
I seat myself and rest a spell;
And ponder over many things
The tranquil evening hour brings.
And then, again, for home I am,
While all around is hushed and calm,
Save that wild bird 'way o'er the hill,
That some one's named the whippoorwill.
And while I love to hear him sing,
I can't refrain from whistling.
And soon, I'm whistling past the barn,
And on my strolls around the tarn,
For ducks and geese upon the lake,—
They love to hear my whistles break,
For oft they greet me with a *quack!*
And flop their wings above their back,
Or stop and listen, still as mice,
As if to say: "It sounds so nice!"
And here I am at home again,
But all is silent now within,
Save now and then, my watchful cur
Sends forth a growl, as I draw near.
The lights are low; I take a peep,
And find my loved ones fast asleep.
And what a scene in that soft glow,—
I would to God all men might know!
My wife and little daughter lay,
While yet asleep, as if in play.
Our baby's lips enclosed her breast,
One hand was clasped, and one at rest,

'Twas home and motherhood I saw,
The fruits of labor, love, and law.
And now my heart beat loud apace,
And then a smile o'erspread my face.
But while I looked and *sh'd* the pup,
My mouth began to pucker up,
Until I had to grab the thing,
To keep myself from whistling.
And here I opened wide the door,
And softly stole across the floor,
And up the winding stair, aglide,
And in a chamber, long and wide,
With scarce the semblance of a noise,
I pause before my sleeping boys.
And standing prone before them there,
I bow my head in silent prayer,
And ask that Frank and Wade and Ben
May grow at last to useful men.
And then I tuck the covers in,
And press their little hands again,
And leave a kiss on every brow.
And ere I'm gone I take a vow
That I will do whate'er I can
To make of each a noble man.
And then I sally forth again,
To bring some sticks of hickory in,
And split a bunch of kindling wood,
As every thoughtful farmer should,
And lay it down beside the stove,
To help the wife I dearly love.
And go and lock the henhouse tight,
To foil the thieves a-prowl by night,
And see that all the gates are shut,
And everything in place is put;
And turn the power on the mill,
To pump some water o'er the hill,

So all the cattle, when they pass
Along the pasture, out to grass,
The whole of them, from last to first,
May stop awhile and quench their thirst;
And be content, at least till noon,
In these long sultry days in June.
And while around and 'round I go,
Some good-night tune I whistle low,
For there's a gladness in my heart,
To know that I have had a part
And planned and worked with all the rest
That's made this home of happiness.
And then it is I'm off for bed,
Since all I have are housed and fed.
And in the bath I take my seat,
And bathe awhile my weary feet,
And lock the house-doors for the night,
And wind the clock, and turn the light,
And raise the windows for some air,
And hang my trousers on the chair,
And then, a moment, bow my head,
And hail my wife, at last, in bed.
But while I plan, and do my part,
That brings a gladness to my heart,
So oft I hear my neighbors say
When I go by from day to day:
"That's him out there; that's old Tom King!
He makes his mun by whistling."
But I don't care what people say,
I tell you what, these things will pay:
A kindly word, a whistling tune,
Will make December mild as June.

WHEN WE LIVED ON THE FARM

When we lived on the farm
In that long time ago,—
When we lived on the old-fashioned farm,
There was much to be learned
That you all ought to know,
When we lived out there on the farm.

There was seed to be sown
In the spring of the year,
When we lived on the old-fashioned farm;
And from morning till night
There was many a care
When we lived out there on the farm.

And we found lots of work,
And the days seemed so long,
When we lived on the old-fashioned farm,
But the air was so pure
That we all grew up strong,
When we lived out there on the farm.

And the pleasures we found
In that sweet rural life,
When we lived on the old-fashioned farm,
I'm recounting them oft
To my children and wife,—
When we lived out there on the farm.

MIGRATORY MAN

Not I alone in youth's fair day,
While onward yet I strolled,
Not I alone saw Fortune's car
Before me ever rolled.
In all the walks of life, they were,
Unfolding still their plans,
And north and south, and east and west,
In search of distant lands.
The farmers sought the countries new,
The miners sought the mine,
And bade farewell to every tie,
And left their friends behind.
For youth must build a castle high,
And gild its dazzling dome,
And yet this picture always lies
A thousand miles from home.
And so they went, my early friends,
Lone wandering afar,
Nor do I know until this day
Where many of them are.
And yet, some few of these I've found,—
Some names I held so dear;
And these had sought the Western wilds,
Among the pioneers.
And some, perchance, were lost at sea,
And sleep beneath the wave,
And other ones, for aught I know,
May fill a pauper's grave.
And Fortune's car is still in sight,
And ever will remain,
And year by year it's teeming forth
Across the distant plain.

For youth is still the same to-day,
As I was in the morn,
In after years it is, we find,
Realities are born.

THE MEADOW LARK

As fair as the sunshine,
As bright as the moon,
Away, like the winds,—far away,—
As tranquil as evening,
Some evening in June,
The meadow lark, hallows the day.

A blast from his trumpet,
A flash from his wing,
As he mounts like a rocket, so high!
What a thrill of delight now
His lullaby brings,
As he floats, like a speck in the sky.

And the tune that he sings,
How it thrills with delight!—
Far sweeter than aught I have heard,—
As upward and onward
He wheels in his flight,—
Is the song of this delicate bird.

"Away to the wheat-fields!"
He calls to his mate,
"Away to the barley and rye!"
Away like an arrow
As swiftly and straight,
With a *tweet, throttle, tweet,* passing by.

Away o'er the meadow,
Away o'er the grain,—
  They are seeking a home for a nest,
Beyond the broad river
And valley and plain,
  That lie far away to the west.

DAYBREAK

The quickening pulse of day comes on,
  The shades of night in sadness flee,
And so, at last, the gladsome dawn,
  A victor stands o'er land and sea.

Meanwhile, the hills, with dewy gleams,
  Assistance lend, to help adorn;
And all the brooks, and all the streams,
  Exalting spring, to greet the morn.

Then, too, yon peak, cloudwrapt and weird,
  And every vale, that smiling lies,
With promptness each, they join the bird,
  That fills with rapture all the skies.

And thus we see the long, dark night,
  Is chased around the whole of earth,
In full retreat, and constant flight,
  A vanquished foe, by nobler worth.

And so we bless the brilliant morn
  With what of hope the soul hath found,
As when, again, the sun is born,
  That lagging faith may more abound:

A faith in every law ordained,
Though nights may come, and storms may rage,
Since all of these have been sustained,
They will be yet from age to age.

Then let us rest this troubled mind,
Nor fear the darkness by the way,
And in the end, we all may find,
The dawning of another day.

THE HEIRS

All wrapt up in his princely pride,
A man once lived, and then he died.
And friends he had, afar and wide,
Declaring he had money.

And in his tomb of granite stone,
As costly as the world had known,—
They laid him down to sleep alone,
Like others, gone before him.

And while he slept there in his place,
All wound around with golden lace,
His heirs came on, and sought to trace
Their uncle's ample fortune.

And o'er the records, here and there,
With what few days they had to spare,
They searched the court-house everywhere,
But nothing was discovered.

Then up and down the land they went,
Upon their nervous mission bent,
For one and all was confident
That he was awful wealthy.

But always still, from eve till morn,
The trail led back where he was born,
Around the groves that still adorn
The onward flowing river.

And while they closely searched around,
Among some vacant lots in town,
At last they said: "We've surely found
His box of hidden treasure."

But when they pried the boards apart,
As gladness swept through every heart,—
All empty now, it made them start,
For want of any money.

And yet, down there, some papers lay,
As yellow as the yellow clay,
But all the writer had to say:
"I've squandered every penny.

"For I conceived ere life was done,
All men should live and have their fun,
Nor should they leave for any one
A single, blessed dollar.

"And this, to spur them on their way,
And make them strong, from day to day,
That none may stop, and idly say:
'I have some rich relation.'"

And this was all the writer said
Before in death he bowed his head,
Advising all to earn their bread,
By honest, daily labor.

And while they stood around this ring,
With frowns that disappointments bring,
Their leader spoke, and said: "By jing!
We're like a lot of children."

And sternly then, in tones sublime
That ring above this jingling rhyme:
"Come on, my friends, we've ample time
To make ourselves a fortune!"

And straightway, then, they turned about,
With manhood strong, and lusty shout,
And home they went, to take the route
That leads to independence.

And wide they scattered all around,
In lands remote, and country town,
And traders some, and some a-plow'n',
In search of peace and plenty.

And years went by,—full many years,—
All laden down with hopes and fears,
And pleasure came, as well as tears,
But all began to prosper.

For now they'd learned that men of state,
And famous sage, and truly great,
Not one of these would ever wait
Another one's possessions.

And mind you, too, they'd gone to work,
In factories some, and some to clerk,
And scarce a thing they'd ever shirk
That meant accumulation.

And plenty came, and bowed him down,
O'er acres wide, and country town,
And jewels flashed on every gown
Of honest occupation.

But not for them enormous wealth
That seems to breed a life of stealth,
And robs its owner of his health,
A-toiling on forever.

But just enough, and nothing more,
A distance safe beyond the poor,
That none might come and grumble o'er
The fruitage of their labor.

And these are all alive to-day,
And o'er and o'er I've heard them say:
"'Twas in the gladsome month of May
When we went hunting money;

"And there we stood, erect and bold,
All peering down into that hole,
That never held an ounce of gold,
For any one's relation.

"And ragged men stood there in place,
And youth and age, with anxious face,
And well-nigh all, we showed a trace
Of careless dissipation.

"For heirs, you see, are prone to wait
And boast them oft and dissipate,
Expecting much from some estate
Belonging unto others.

"For this old world she hath her ways,
Like hunting bear in childhood days,
When every log that rotting lays,
Seems one, among the forest."

So time went on for every one,
Much like the rise and setting sun,
And ere they knew, this race was won,—
This race for home and pleasure.

And every year, some time in May,
When all of Nature seems at play,
And birds begin to build and lay,
They have a grand reunion.

And hunt, and fish, and rest the mind,
And have their sports of every kind,
And climb the trails that twist and wind
Themselves around the mountains.

And here, among some giant trees,
Where flowers bloom for busy bees,
They pitch their tents, and take their ease,
And laugh about their folly.

And thank their stars for all the past,
When follies held them ever fast,
For since they've freed themselves at last,
They glory in their labors.

And yet each year, they still to-day,
This game of fortune-hunting play,
And lead their little tots astray,
To hunt for hidden treasure.

So they may learn this folly too,
As older ones have come to do,
That late in life they may not rue
This nightmare of deception.

And when a proper place is found,—
Such as the vacant lots in town,—
Some grandpa hides beneath the ground
A box containing something.

And when the evening dews are damp,
He moves around among the camp,
And softly 'neath each hanging lamp,
He tells of uncle's fortune.

And little children crowd around,
From lands remote, and country town,—
All sleepy, and in nighty gown,
To hear the evening story.

And then he takes them on his knee,
As soberlike as he can be,
And leads them on, until they see
This folly of the ages.

And here his voice is low and soft,
And there he flings it high aloft,
And thus it is, for hours oft,
He seemeth not to worry.

And now, he's down beside the brook,
Or with the tots of Bonilook,
And so he's found in every nook,
Before the evening passes.

And round and round the camp he goes,
And in the minds of youth he sows
This story that forever grows,—
About another's money.

And late at night he goes to bed,
When all the sky's a golden red,
And twinkling stars gleam overhead,
Presaging pleasant weather.

And when at last the stars are gone,
And morning brings the early dawn,
And shadows flit across the lawn,
Beneath the shady forest,

Outringing loud, there comes a cry,
As children call, and answer, "I!"
And grandpa comes, with spirits high,
To lead the grand procession.

And round him now, with faces bland,
At least a score of children stand,
And each one speaks of something grand
Bequeathed them by their uncle.

And then he forms them all in line,
These tots of six, and eight, and nine,
And bows him down, with gestures kind,
And marches on before them.

And down the vale, beside the wood,
Where once an Indian village stood,
They find some holes that look so good
They stop awhile, to parley.

But grandpa thinks some wigwam pole,
Instead their uncle's heaps of gold,
Has once reposed in every hole
That marks this ancient village.

"But now," said he, "way o'er the hill,
A forest lies, beyond the mill,
Where, some affirm, are roaming still
The catamount and panther.

"And where the beaver builds his dam,
When streams are low, and nights are calm,
And where the daring mountain ram
Leaps wildly o'er the crevice.

"And like to this, some woodland deep,
Where torrents rush, and foam and sweep,
Our kinsman oft, when sound asleep,
He'd speak about his savings.

"And friends declare, ere he awoke,
While dreaming thus, he often spoke,
About some old majestic oak,
Outstanding in the open.

"But when awake, as all had feared,
No mention of this tree was heard,
Nor would he say a single word,
About the distant forest.

"And now, out there, it seems to me,
His wealth must lie beneath this tree,
And should we find it, we'll all be
As rich as any Morgan.

"And come, let's go and search for this,
That may bestow such lasting bliss,
On every lad and every miss,—
And I'll lead on, directing!"

And on they went, along the way,
By sliding rocks and banks of clay,
Until the sun before them lay
High up, around the zenith.

But soon this orb, that shone so bright,
Began to darken from their sight,
And great huge clouds, as black as night,
Came bounding o'er the forest.

"A storm, a storm!" the children cried,
While booming thunderbolts replied,
And lightning threw her curtains wide,
Out o'er the wailing woodlands.

And while the clouds grew darker still,
With rain the streams began to fill,
And soon, they might have run a mill,
On-sweeping down the valley.

And high and higher rose the flood,
Uprooting trees, and bush, and bud,
All loathsome, dark, and full of mud,
Commingling in its vortex.

But soon the storm had passed them by,
And bright the sun shone in the sky,
And on they went again, to try,
To find their uncle's fortune.

And now before them gently broke,
An open park of scattered oak,
And with a smile, their leader spoke,
And pointed straight before him.

And soon they stood beneath this tree,
That reared its head in majesty,
And paths led off, as all could see,
In various directions.

And on this tree, some signs were found,
Out-pointing here and there around,
And one there was that struck the ground,
Some distance in the open.

And grandpa walked straight out to this,
And every lad, and every miss,
They followed him, with childish bliss,—
So brightly shone the prospect.

And here it was, they quickly found,
A slight depression in the ground,
And indications lay around
That some one had been digging.

And grandpa dropped upon his knee,
The better thus to better see
What made this hole beneath the tree
Way out amid the forest.

And every child bent down as low,
All circling in an endless row,
And all excited, asked to know,
What grandpa thought about it.

"Why, yes, to me it seemeth clear,
That some one has been digging here.
And from the indications near,
It must have been our kinsman."

And gazing long within this hole
The children thought was full of gold,
A scene came back, a story old,—
A story of his childhood.

And while each tot beneath the tree
Was all wrapt up in mystery,
Again he spoke, and said, said he:
"Now, how shall we divide it?

"And now, let's see just what you say,—
All you who came with me to-day,
And left your friends some miles away,—
Your friends that love you dearly.

"And shall we keep the whole of it,
And proudly live, our friends to twit,
And not reserve a single bit
For those we left behind us?"

And "yes! and yes!" they loudly said,
"And let them go and earn their bread,
As did our uncle who is dead,
And we, who found his treasure."

And then he hung his head for shame,
And to his mind a thought there came,
And each of us are much the same
Regarding distribution.

And while he stood and mused a spell,
Loud shouts of joy arose and fell,
As every child began to tell
About the things they wanted.

"And I shall have my hobby horse,
That's what I will!" cried Harry Morse,
And Willie, too, "Why yes, of course;
And we'll ride out together,

"And canter, canter down the lane,
And whirl and canter back again,
Just like the soldiers do that train,—
The soldiers in the army."

And out spoke May, with much delight:
"Not I to train, and march, and fight;
But I shall have my diamonds bright,
And be a perfect lady;

"And wear the finest furs in town,
Above my jaunty silken gown,
And have my car to ride around;
And live a life of pleasure."

And so on down along the line,
Among these tots, from six to nine,
And each one spoke of something fine
To gratify their longing.

Then grandpa rose, and sought his spade
That near some spreading lindens laid,
And while his charges round him played,
He now began his labor.

And while he smiled, and turned his head,
In solemn tones he gently said:
"Who knows but what some luckless dead
Lies here in peaceful slumber?

"And yet, perchance, we'd better see
What lies beneath this sturdy tree,
And if a million here should be,
What gladness that we found it!"

And so the hours slipped away,
And still he delved among the clay,
While all around the children lay
And watched his every movement.

And while, at last, there comes a sound,
Dull mumbling down among the ground,
And, "Grandpa dear, and have you found
The money, that was hidden?"

"Not yet, and still, something I've struck
Down here among this sandy muck,
And if we have some decent luck
In what lies here before us,

"It seems to me, this spacious hole,
So huge it is, it may unfold,
At least some wagonloads of gold
For those who need it badly."

And then there was a wild pellmell,
From all the merry children fell,
And this continued quite a spell,
Exulting o'er their riches.

And while the romping children played,
Much louder now the grinding spade,
A hollow sounding noise it made,
Far down among the gravel.

And while with care he worked away,
He upward turned his face to say:
"Be quiet there, for some one may
Be near enough to hear us.

"And if they are, they'll claim, you see,
This box and all beneath the tree,
And drive us off, and luckless we
Will never get a penny!"

And over each and all once more
A silence fell, as ne'er before,
For tots, like men, despise the poor
And ragged clothes and squalor.

And soon before this silent throng
A box was seen, some four feet long
And deep and wide and awful strong,
And nailed as if forever.

And grandpa rose and softly spoke,
In whispers low, "It's solid oak,
And my! 'twill take a giant stroke
To rend the box asunder.

"And quickly, now, my little Max,
Run yonder, son, and bring the ax,
And I'll give these some awful whacks,
And open out this treasure."

And once again he sought the pit,
And bending low, he smiled a bit,
For all the past, he thought of it,
When he was like the children.

And with his ax, he'd brought along,
He struck these boards so hard and strong,
They sounded like some distant gong,
'Way off among the forest.

And while he chopped and mauled away,
Down there among the clammy clay,
The children all, I heard them say:
"Dod bless our dear old uncle!"

And soon, he chopped his way inside,
And through this hole, now long and wide,
A metal box the children spied,
All solid, locked, and rusty.

And over this he worked and pried,
And sought to lift it out, he tried,
And near it was his strength denied
This final consummation.

But when at last he brought it out,
They all agreed, beyond a doubt,
A chest like this, so huge and stout,
Must hold a world of money.

But when the lid lay open wide,
A shock sprang out to wound their pride,
And one and all, the children cried,
"Our uncle has deceived us!"

For there, before their anxious look,
While one and all a-tremble shook,
Alone they saw a single book,
Of ponderous proportions.

But unto them, to stay their rage,
Their leader read the title page,
And said: "Perchance, some learned sage
Has left you this, a treasure."

And then, assuming gestures bold,
To soothe their fears, he stood and told,
Of others who had found no gold,
And yet, some priceless papers.

For these, although of simple kind,
They so appealed unto the mind,
They broke the cords that often wind
Themselves around the shiftless.

"And so with you, in years to come,
This book, maybe, you'll often thumb,
And make of it your closest chum,
And bless the day you found it.

"For it may yet contain more gold,
When riper years for you unfold,
Than any chest could ever hold,
Regardless of dimensions.

"For this may teach each one of you
The ways of life you should pursue,
And take your hands, and lead you through
The pleasures of existence.

"And point the right among the wrong,
And bid you shun the wicked throng,
And touch your heart with magic song,
And make your life worth living.

"For wealth," said he, "in time grows old,
Like sparkling gems and tinkling gold;
At least this much we're often told
By many who have tried it."

And when these things the children heard,
Deep silence in their midst appeared,
Nor was there one who had a word
To offer in rebuttal.

And here, well-nigh, our story ends,
Excepting yet some few amends,
On which a romance oft depends,
A-rounding at the finish.

'Twas evening now, and westward far
Soft lay the clouds, a crimson bar,
And just above, the evening star
Shone forth in all her splendor.

An evening such, the tender mind,
In after years, is apt to find,
Some incident has come to wind
Around the heart forever.

And grandpa now with pleasure shook,
While over all he cast a look,
And high above, he held his book,—
This wondrous book of knowledge.

And while he stood and gently bowed,
In pleasant tones he spoke aloud,
And of his work, he felt as proud
As though he'd found a million.

For while deception seems unkind,
Sometimes it helps to free the mind,
When youth is yet so much inclined
To wander from its moorings.

And thus we've sought to plant the truth,
Within this field, that man pursueth
In early life, and tender youth,
For truth should be encouraged.

For on this rock, the great and small
And high and low and one and all
May nobly rise, or lowly fall,
Contingent on their pleasure.

And *finis* all, and here we rest,
With this implanted in the breast,
That none through life may be distressed,
Concerning means and money.

KATE SHELLY

Above the noises born of earth,
And thunderbolt and fire,
A hand was thrust, and voices cried:
"Belovéd, come up higher."
And then, a softly beaming light
Rose gently o'er the plain,
Illuminating all the night,—
So radiant its train.

And music, from an unseen band,
With vibrant sweetness played,
Which swept with rapture all the land,
In honoring the maid.
Kate Shelly's crossed the stream again,
That dark and stormy river,
And left behind the haunts of men
And Honey Creek forever.

MY HEART AND I

This ever-patient little heart of mine
A stranger seems to sleep and rest.
And pray, what godly impetus divine,
First gave thee motion in my breast?

Whose hand was it that sent thee bounding,
Now to, now fro, within this narrow cell?
Whose voice that spoke, in tones astounding?
I've sought and sought; but none can tell.

Ah, silent still, and speak but once to-day,
I'd treasure well the words you spoke,
Ere thou, upon thy dark and toilsome way,
Resum'st again thy noiseless stroke.

And how can pleasures gild thy dungeon walls,
Deprived of all this world of light,
While yet thy pulsing motions rise and fall,
Surrounded by eternal night?

Chained to thy post, thy station still denies
To thee and thine the light of day,
While all this world of beauty round thee lies,
As fragrant as the month of May.

And still, no helper ever comes to take thy oar,
And bid thee rest upon the stream,
Nor can thy vision glimpse the distant shore
Where changing landscapes glint and gleam.

And yet, thou art the fountain source, I know,
Of all these organs I possess,
But, ere this blood of mine began to flow,
I falter, even with a guess,

Why one should ever live and thrive and grow,
Without a heart or lung or breath.
Unless, maybe, the Lord has willed it so
That we live onward after death.

For if it were that we once blithely grew
A nerveless, senseless, thoughtless brain,
In reason's realm, it seems there's nothing new,—
And why should one not live again?

Meanwhile, thou art my servant yet each day,
And still my life is in thy hands,
And I, like thee, must grope along the way
Amid life's ever-changing sands.

And while I see afar with mortal eyes,
The greening fields that ever come and go,
And while each height is still a grand surprise,
The Great Beyond I may not know.

But these are transient,—all these passing scenes
That rise and fall like day and night;
The one great problem yet, whate'er it means,
Lies hidden still beyond my sight.

And still, my little heart, go ever on and on,
In silence here within my longing breast;
Beyond this darkness yet may lie the dawn
For all, of sweet and tranquil rest.

THE SOLDIER'S FAREWELL

"I'm going to the army, Mag,
Behold my uniform!
Our reg'ment now is all complete,
We're marching in the morn.
It's awful, dear, I know it is,
The love for you I bore,
But God has so created me
I love my country more.
I went this morn to watch the drill
Upon the village green,
And hundreds more, they followed me,
To gaze upon the scene.
Out where our flag was flying, Mag,
Above the army post,
And there I heard the noisy guns
On down along the coast.
And when I saw our enemies
Come stealing down the bay,
My spirit so possessed me, dear,
I could no longer stay.
For soon, I heard the smaller arms,
And saw the firing-lines,
And long the clang of battle rang
Among the open pines.
Yes, I'm going to the army now,
Our honor to sustain,
And years may pass for us, alas!
Ere I return again.

Go, call the children,—will you, dear?
From out their youthful play;
I want this picture in my heart
When I am far away;
For we may never meet again
Around the social board,
So fraught with danger is the life
That cherishes the sword."

And then a scene before me stood,
That words can never tell,
For while his wife and children wept,
The soldier said farewell.
I've seen him on the picket line,
And out upon the field,
And like a wall of stone he stood
And grasped his trusty steel;
And often, too, I've seen him sent
To execute some plan,—
Dash forward in the face of death
To meet his fellow-man.
And when the clang of battle slept,
I saw his mortal wound,
A smile upon his dying brow,
Upon the frozen ground.
And now he lies at Arlington,
Among the noble slain;
For those who wait and watch for him,
He'll ne'er return again.
He'll ne'er return again, alas!
I hasten to reply:
The spirits of our worthy dead
Are always passing by.
They cheer us on our lonely way
Across the vale and hill,

And while we think of yonder tomb,
They're always with us still.
They live in sculptured marble now,
And decorate our walls,
And seem to press our hands again
Whene'er the evening falls.
And I, as well, I, too, avow,
What he has said before,—
Not that he loves his fam'ly less,
But loves his country more.
While navies build, and armies drill,
And endless forts expand,
Here lies the refuge of our hopes:
The love of native land.

THE COMING AGE

To those who wait as yet
The bourn of time unseen,—
To break the bonds at last
Of hidden birth, I mean,—
Sleep on awhile in peace!
And let the valleys green;
The world is growing fast
In grandeur, day by day.

Sleep on, wee mite, sleep on!
Till war's alarms are o'er,
And navies disappear
From every hostile shore,
And all this strife to-day,
In time, will be no more,
Among the many nations
Of the world.

Sleep on awhile, sleep on!
Until that coming age,
When truth, and truth alone
May grace the virgin page;
While honor stalks abroad
To greet the worthy sage,
And justice is proclaimed
Supreme in every land.

Sleep on awhile, sleep on!
Till caste has been forgot,
And lustful men, as such,
Are left to mold and rot,
And heartless greed for gold
In time will serve them not,—
The avaricious ones
That seek alone for gain.

Sleep on awhile, sleep on!
And see the law's delay,
Like other things now past,
This, too, must pass away;
And love will take the place
Of all of this some day,
And man will truly love
His neighbor as himself.

Sleep on awhile! Some day
All men will see the light;
For other ones have seen
Beyond the darksome night,
The dawning seemeth near,
The morning opens bright,
For those who yet must come
To occupy our place.

THE THINGS THAT LIVE

Who aims at glitter and display,
  And leaves no valued work behind,
All this must find a swift decay,
  Too weak to hold the sober mind.
No lessons stamped upon the heart,
  No guidepost left along the road,
No helping hand, to bear a part
  In lessening our weary load.
So all we write, whate'er the cost,
  Unless it points to something good,
All this I count among the lost,—
  It so has been, and always should.

AT REST

We had a little babe
  That was all our own,
Her flesh, our flesh,
  And bone, our bone!
The sweetest little child,—
  Just about so high,
That played in our home
  Till death came by,
O grave, grave, grave, by her tombstone,
Way down in the earth
  Where she long must lie!
O grave, grave, grave, by her tombstone!
And this took our baby
  When death came by.

And gone is the babe
  That was all our own.
She's gone to her rest
  Near the Great White Throne.
Our own darling child
  With her soft brown hair,
And all we have left
  Is her little armchair.
And hope, hope, and hoping for ever,
That she's found a rest
  In the Master's love.
And trust, trust, and trusting his promise,
And we'll find our baby
  In heaven above.

DISSATISFIED

A WISH cometh often,
  Aflame with desire,
Some longing to soften
  Our passions afire.
And, oh, to be master
  Of all we survey!
And laugh at disaster
  And smile at decay;
And bask us forever
  In gladness untold,
As like to some river
  That never grows old!
And, oh, for a pleasure
  That never will cloy,—
Some blessing, a measure,
  That none can destroy,
Some guidepost directing
  Our footsteps along,

Like music connecting
Our hearts with a song.
To sleep here, to slumber
In sweet ecstasy,
Where none may encumber
The beautiful way,
O Giver of Pleasures,
We look unto thee,
Bestowing Thy treasures
So lavish and free!

BEYOND

In our moments, ever fleeting,
Sweet the memories they tell,
Still advancing and repeating:
"All is well!" and "All is well!"
All beyond this darksome river,
All beyond this fleeting day,
In the Master's presences ever,
Blessed for all eternity.
All beyond this grave before us,
All beyond this darksome night,
Afar, above, beneath, and o'er us
There may be yet a flood of light.
On beyond our every trouble,
On beyond our every grief,
Beyond this life, beyond this bubble,
Now so fragile and so brief.
On beyond this wild confusion,
On beyond this couch of sod,
Disillusioned, our illusions,
In the bosom of our God.
On beyond these sore distresses,
On beyond this throbbing brain,

Swept within His glad caresses,
  There to evermore remain.
On beyond this constant longing,
  On beyond this endless fear,
Ever thronging, ever thronging
  All around us year by year.
On beyond our every sorrow,
  On beyond our every tear,
Over yonder, some to-morrow
  May be waiting for us here.
On beyond this sickness, raging,
  On beyond this death we die,
God, the Father, may be staging
  Other plays that glorify.

THE WRECK AT EDEN, COLORADO [1]

Ever guarding the mountain pass,
  And watching the plain, alert and fleet,
Comes the hour of death,
  With its noiseless feet,
Stealing along the wreck-strewn coasts
Of time, the border lands of mystery.
  Go break the news to Pueblo,
Of life's ever-changing ebb and flow,
  Where matron, and maid, and man at the lever
Went down to their death
  In that wild-plunging river.
In a low-lying valley,
Adjacent the fountain,

[1] At the time this took place, in so far as the loss of life is concerned, it was said to have been the greatest railroad wreck in the United States. No less than one hundred and seven persons lost their lives by the washing away of a small bridge at Eden, Colorado, a few miles out from the city of Pueblo.

A stream flowing down
From the steppes of the mountain,
There is death in the wreckage,
  The flood, and the sand,
And a thousand hearts are bleeding
For the loss of life at Eden,
A lonely little station there
  Along the Rio Grande.

And the train was lost at Dry Creek,
A place where one can die quick,
Should troubles multiply
And rend the heart asunder,
And to the youth of tender age,
And to the grandsire, and to the sage,
And to the suicide, a haven,
For here's a perfect grave in
The crazy bridge, and rushing deep,
And awful plunge, and frightful leap,
To death in the wreckage,
  The flood, and the sand,
And a thousand hearts are bleeding
For the loss of life at Eden,—
A lonely little station there
  Along the Rio Grande.

'Twas on a stormy August eve,
  And the date was number seven,
And the train that hurried on the way
  Was the flyer, number Eleven,
On a long and tedious journey
To the Louisiana Fair.
But the story's soon forgotten,
Of a shaky bridge that's rotten,
And the human trap at Dry Creek,
The place where one can die quick,

In a splintered mass of twisted beams,
And sobs, and moans, and muffled screams,
In the waters of the torrent,
  And the wreckage, and the sand,
And a thousand hearts a-bleeding
For the loss of life at Eden,
A lonely little station there
  Along the Rio Grande.

'Twas in the darksome night time,
And seemingly, the right time,
When pleasures reign supreme,
With love and hope content,
The flashing eye, and beaming face,
And pose of ease and cultured grace;
Inside the romping children played,
No thought of danger, undismayed,
Outside, the vivid lightnings flash,
Then lo! a shock, a scream, a crash,
And death in the wreckage,
  The flood, and the sand,
And a thousand hearts are bleeding
For the loss of life at Eden,
A lonely little station there
  Along the Rio Grande.

And some were out for pleasure,
  And some were going home,
With anxious friends awaiting
  The train that ne'er would come.
Not a warning from the darkness,
Not a message from the wire,
And sweeping down the waters high,
The bridge was wrecked and gone,
And swiftly on her journey bent,

The flyer swept along; not a flagman,
  Not a signal, not a breath,
Not the swinging of a lantern
  Across the road to death;
Not the blowing of a whistle,
  Not the ringing of a bell,
And so silently and swiftly,
  And not a soul to tell
Of the waters dashing onward,
  And the wreckage, and the sand,
And a thousand hearts are bleeding
For the loss of life at Eden,
A lonely little station there,
  Along the Rio Grande.

CARMEL BY THE SEA

There is majesty in motion,
  There is poetry in pose,
The storms upon the ocean,
  And the star that ever glows;
But naught that I have ever seen
  Is so beautiful to me
As ripples o'er thy coral strands
  Sweet Carmel by the Sea.

I know of mountains miles in height,
  With pinnacles so bold,
No eagle ever dares a flight
  Where stormy blasts unfold;
But why should I revert to these?
  My dearest, let us flee,
Adown the paths that wind around
  Sweet Carmel by the Sea.

Let others seek the Arctic seas,
  Or dare the dismal mines,
Give me my flowers and my bees
  And California wines,
And never-ending pleasures, dear,
  Like children in their glee,
That romp along this merry coast,
  Sweet Carmel by the Sea.

THE FLEETING DAY

The fleeting day goes by
And yet we labor on,
To balance up the book
Of wistful memories;
And then, forgetting all
The worries of the world,
We list the plaintive call
That all around us lies,
And find a dreamless sleep
Of endless slumbering,
And never wake to tell
Of mysteries beyond.

THE HOME

The home is where the heart is,
And where no homes abound,
No heart is strong enough
To bridge the dismal void.
And the home, it speaks of childhood,
And the toylands of youth,

And brings to mind again
The cradle songs of old,
When mother used to sit
Low crooning in the room,
Above her needlework.
And the home, it speaks of love,
And points us back again
To our departed friends,
And throws upon the screen
A host of memories
That time cannot efface.
But later on in life
The home speaks louder still,
And never fails to cheer
The heart of every man.
And here, around his hearth,
Made sacred unto him
By every tie that binds,
A mighty host he is
Of superhuman strength.
And should the clouds of war
Rise darkling o'er the way,
And mutterings be heard
From some relentless foe,
He'll need no clanging drum
To stir the blood within
His patriotic breast.
And so, it's not for him,
His *country* calls aloud
When danger seemeth near,
For in the darksome night,
While others slumber on,
He leaves his couch behind,
And hastens to the front,
And vows to save his *home,*
Or die a noble death

Upon the field of strife.
And here, we have the man,
The grandest man of all,
Though humble he may be,—
The man who loves his home.

POESY

And who art thou, affirming oft,
That poesy is dead?
These thoughts of grandeur, flung aloft,
Have these forever fled?
And does this sunset flash in vain
His radiant displays,
And all this gorgeous evening train
Belong to other days?
And is this statue but a stone
Dragged from its resting-place,
Devoid of every touch and tone,
Regardless of its grace?
If so, then beauty must have flown
Beyond the reach of all,
And weeps in solitude,—alone,—
The sadness of her fall.

CAPITOL HILL STATUE

DENVER

Grim warrior, on thy pedestal,
What enemies of late,
Look longingly from distant lands,
A menace to our State!

What secret chambers canst thou see,
Where plots are being laid
By those whose open friendliness
Is constantly displayed?
And guard thou well our endless seas
With vigils, day and night,
And keep thy sword and rifle clean,
And all thy cannon bright.
If aught should ever come to cause
Thy watchfulness alarm,
Our factories are ready now;
The plowman on his farm
Can leave to others all he has,
His ripened fields to mow,
And join the flag he loves so well,
To meet a common foe.
For everything that we possess
Has come to us through tears
And orphans made on battlefields
These some four hundred years.
And in defense of these we stand,
And every man a host,
One hundred million strong at least
We are, from coast to coast.
So keep thy trusty rifle still
Securely in thy hand,
Prepared, with might, to stand and fight
For this your native land!

COMPENSATION

What matter tide and time,
And anxious years a few,
If one has found in life
A noble friend or two?

MY DARLING JIM

THERE'S a sadness felt
In the stifling air,
And the songster weeps
  On his homing limb,
And the clouds lie dark
In the distance there,
And naught have I heard
  From my darling Jim.

And green is the grass
In that distant land
Where the miles sweep on
  O'er a vast expanse,
And the vales are sweet
And the hills are grand,
In the vineclad fields
  Of that sunny France.

And the time was morn,
And the dawning light,
Like a gleam of hope,
  In the foreground lay,
And the lines led off
To the left and right,
As the sun broke forth
  On that fateful day.

For lo! in the stillness
That hovered around,
An ominous shot
  From a distance fell,

And a host lay there
On the crimson ground,
All silent in death
From a bursting shell.

And the noon came by,
And the lines grew thin,
As the wavering fields
Were captured and lost,
And the contest rang
With a frightful din,
Like an angry wave
On the ocean tossed.

And the forts they took!
And the forts they lost!
In many a charge
Of the clanging steel,
And backward and forward
The armies were tossed,
Like a ball that's swept
O'er a struggling field.

And bold in the face
Of carnage and death,
One soldier, there was,—
And I thought of him,
And my heart stood still
And I held my breath,
So fearful I was
For my darling Jim.

And the day wore on,
And the evening came,
And the shot still fell
Like a storm of hail,

And watching, at last
My mind grew dumb,
At a harvest of death
Where none ever quail.

And the moon rose high
O'er that ghastly scene,
And a brightness flung
For many a mile,
And searching, she found
On the grasses green,
Full many a mother's
Darling child.

And they called each name,
And reckoned the spoil,
Of those who had veered
To the left and right,
Ere the army slept
From its frightful toil,
As well as it could
Through the passing night.

And many a comrade
Was called and passed,
As friends stood there
With a silent glance,
But their hopes all fled,
And their friends at last,
To the vineclad hills
Of that sunny France.

And the morning broke
O'er the fields once more,
And the dead lay heaped
In their trenches there,—

And my darling Jim,
In a pool of gore,
From a gunshot wound
In his curly hair.

OUR OLD HOME

Sue, I'm looking o'er our farm again;
Where once we worked so hard,
O'er things that both of us enjoyed,
That's now forever barred.
In passing o'er the rising ground
Along the southern road,
I watched the billow of the fields
That I had often mowed,
And called to mind a host of things
And pleasures that have flown,
In meditation, as I walked
Along the road alone.
How time can wreck our fondest hopes,
And blind our eyes with tears!—
We find at last in looking back
Along the flight of years.
I passed the garden on my way,
And turning down the lane,
I thought I heard the boys at play
Beyond the hills again.
"They're playing ball," I said aloud,
So lovely was the day.
But when I spoke, all merriment
Was quickly swept away.
And still I waited long to hear,
Once more that joyful sound,
In listening attitude intent,
While gazing on the ground.

And waiting thus, it seemed to me,
So many things appeared,
To break upon my listening ears,
That I had often heard.
'Way off among the southern woods,
I heard the hooting owl,
And from the monarch of his flock
The clarion of the fowl;
And laughing children on their way
A-chatter down the road,
Just like our own that went to school,
So happily they strode;
And out among our maple trees,
The songster in his glee;
And dashing homeward from the fields,
The faithful little bee.
And to my senses, now alert,
Among the sounds of morn,
One sound there was I'll ne'er forget,—
The sound of planting corn.
Glad sounds for us in days gone by,
The rural world employs,
But these were not the sounds I sought,—
The playgrounds of the boys.
I walked out to the northern gate,
And looked the pasture o'er,
But nought was there to indicate
What I had heard before.
I called aloud, but called in vain,
For there was no reply,
'Twas but an echo of the past
I heard, in passing by.
And north and south and east and west,
I rambled o'er the farm,
And oft I'd stop to view some spot
That held a magic charm.

And to each field I said farewell,
And stroked its furrowed brow,
And promised all I'd soon return,
Among the dust, I trow.
Our fields and lanes and lines of fence
The same resemblance bore,
But other things we left behind,—
I found they were no more.
The spring, where we had often drunk,
And bathed our fevered brow,
Was gone, like many of our friends,
I cannot tell you how.
As well the home, in which we lived,
That saw our children's birth,
Had long since gone, like other things,
To mingle with the earth.
And, too, our barn of sturdy oak,
A refuge from the storm,
And these I sought, but all I found
Was there in spirit form.
But in their place, two others stood,
As strongly built as they,
But oh! the thoughts that filled my heart,
I falter here to say.
I walked up to the house and rapped,—
Loud rapping on the door,—
A lady came and bowed to me
I never saw before.
And when I took a seat inside
And cast my eyes around,
I noticed, with a sweeping glance,
The lady sternly frowned.
"I beg your pardon, lady friend;
I used to live out here,
And every tree and every shrub
Hold memories still dear.

You see, misfortune came to us
And wrecked a lovely home,
And now, that we are growing old
And find ourselves alone,
The mind goes back to other years,
That youth can never feel,
For softer grows the aging heart,
As fire softens steel.''

DREAMS

There are all kinds of dreams
That we meet with in life,
And some that are dripping
Like the blood from a knife.
There's the dreamer of the night,
And the dreamer of the day,
And thousands who are dreaming
Their whole lives away.
And many of these dreams
Have never yet been told,
Those dreams where the wildest
Of our passions will unfold.
Enshrined, they are floating
Out yonder in the sky,
Some vision of a lover that
Will never, never die.
And many of these dreamers
They revel with delight,
In telling of the dreams they
Were dreaming in the night.
And yet, I love the dreamer most
That's dreaming all the day,—
Who sees beyond the misty years
His little ones at play,

And a-smiling in the eve,
  And a-smiling in the morn,
The dreamer who is dreaming
  Of the future yet unborn.
And a greeting for his neighbor,
  As he drives along the lane,
For the sowing and the reaping
  And the harvest of the grain.
And a cottage in the valley,
  And the lowing of the kine,
And the bees a-toting honey
  From the blossom of the vine.
And the money's in the bank,
  And the fodder's in the barn,
And a helper who is handy
  With her needle and her yarn.
There's a pleasure in this dream,
  And it has a lasting charm,
Overflowing, like the measure
  That is found upon the farm.
So the sweetest dream of all:
  For it drives away the gloam,—
Is the dreaming of the family,—
  And the dreaming of the home.

THE ONE TO CHOOSE

With men of strength and character,
  And morals in their place,
It's not a case of rarity,
  To build a noble race.
For men are most, and most of all,
  The stamina of life,
Supreme, within this sacred call,
  Much more than any wife.

Then look to him, ye maidens fair,
  And choose him as above,
And let not some deceiver share
  The bounties of your love;
For, know you not, the male is still
  The most important part?
And only one of strength can fill
  The gladness of your heart.

THE BIRD

Who sings to me
When I'm alone?
  The little bird.
Far sweeter seem
Its mellow tones
  Than aught I've heard.

As when I oft
My rambles take,
  The birds are near,
And hail me gladly
Down the brake,
  From year to year.

Fond memories
I have, so dear,
  When yet a boy;
And then I often
Lingered near,
  With childish joy.

For oft it was,
Some grand old hymn
  Escaped their throat,
And heaved the breast
And quaked the limb,
  To shade the note.

And yet they labor
With their song,
  As all may see,—
With hopes and fears
The whole day long,
  The same as we.

The coldest blast
That sweeps the plain,
  They dare to meet,
And scorn the tempest
Loud amain,
  With barren feet.

The Lord, no doubt,
Hath sent the bird
  A mother's love.
He whispered, and
She doubtless heard
His voice above.

Reposing all
Her trust in Him,
  He keeps her warm,
While yet her chamber's
But a limb
  Amid the storm.

And in the spring
She mounts the stage,
To find a home
Among the deepest
Foliage
That forms a dome.

For well she knows
That shortly death
Will hush her song,
And stay her heart,
And still her breath
In silence long.

And so she builds
Herself a nest,
And hums her lay,
And all the world
Has doubtless guessed
What she must say.

"The Lord hath given
Unto me
The seeds of life,
Behold the harvest
That's to be
Awaits the knife."

I saw her mate,
Athwart the sky,
In swift pursuit
And turned my head
In passing by,
In silence mute.

They found a place
Beyond the hill
  To build their nest,
Above some gently
Flowing rill—
  You know the rest.

You've seen the eggs
That she has laid,
  And heard the cry
Of little fledgelings
In the shade,—
  And so have I.

It's done,—the great
Transaction's done!
  Earth gives applause
From age to age,
And sun to sun,
  Unto these laws.

MY FRIEND

For every patient soul
Who calmly bides his time,
All seasons have their June,
When brilliant flowers bloom
Among the wintry blast;
And greening fields protrude
Themselves before his sight,
And pleasant songs come back
From long departed birds.

And for each passing cloud,
Portentous with despair,
He has a winsome smile
That drives the gloom away,
And leaves an impress deep
On every human heart.
And while some passing storm
Makes dreary all the day,
And wailing winds moan round
His solitary home,
Attuned to other times,
His vision leaps the bounds
That lay around his feet,
And soaring high above
The worries of the world,
He sees the gentle spring
Peep o'er the distant hills,
And hears the bleating lamb
Upon the meadows near.

And oft I've heard it said:
"For him there is no night,
When shadows overcast
The gladsome hearts of men,
And leave them stranded there
Without a gleam of hope.
And for the frowns of earth
That bar so oft the way
To pleasures strewn around,
He seemed to have a host
Of pleasant company
That ever spoke aloud
Of better times to come.

And while he moved along
Upon the tide of time,

One thought possessed him much,
And this I've heard him oft
Repeating o'er and o'er,
As though he would impress
Upon the minds of all
The values that exist
In every passing hour.
"It's the rising and the setting
Of the sun," he'd say,
"And twinkling star,
And changing moon,
Until the reaper comes,
And bids us,—every one,—
Return unto the dust."

And this was years ago,
When childhood was no more,
And we had drawn apart,
Each one upon his way,—
And he, to write his books,
And I, to delve away,
My life upon the farm.
And while we stood upon
The parting of the way,
He gently bent him down
And whispered in my ear,
And told me of the plans
And labors of his life.

And from that very day
Ambition wrought in him
A deep and lasting change,
That gripped his very soul,
And chained him, like a slave,
To one eternal task.

And soon he left his home,
And sought for quietude
Among the distant hills,
And here he reared alone
This cabin in the wood,
And gave his manhood strong,
And all the passing years,
To gratify a bent
That Nature plants within
The breast of every man.
Triumphant o'er the ways
And worries of the world,
He bent him to his task
Along the lines he loved,
And seemed to find in this
That tranquil happiness
That riches cannot give.

And all aglow with life,
I've seen him sally forth
In quest of some retreat,
Among the riven rocks
That piled themselves around
His lonely cabin home
And peopling the drear wastes
And silent pinnacles
With many a trenchant thought,
He flung the years away,
As many another might
The clods beneath the feet.
And, rich in fancy's wealth,
He'd paint some glowing scene
That rose before his sight,
And call to being there
The verdure of the fields,

And make the flowers bloom
In gorgeous groups around,
And tune the songless birds
With endless melody.

But, hark! The postman calls
Upon his whistle near,—
A long, and plaintive call,
That seems to indicate
Bereavement in my mail. . . .
And so my friend is gone!
He sleeps the sleep of death
Beneath his favorite oak
That shades the rustic seat
Whereon, so long he sat,
When age had pilfered all
The vitals of his youth,
And left him there alone
To struggle with the world.
And since he is no more,
I shall redeem the pledge
That bosom friends exact
Of those remaining still;
And o'er his humble grave
I'll place a fitting shaft,
To mark the resting-place
Of him who was my friend.
And these shall be the lines
In memory of him,
To show the worthy man
Who occupies this tomb.
And let the lines you find
In stanza number one
Be chiseled deep and wide,
That time may not efface
The simple tribute paid.

And while he sleeps his sleep,
Beneath the tree he loved,
In branches, high above,
The birds may sing for him
A requiem of peace.

THE AGED TRAVELER

Aged traveler on life's journey,
Ere the shades of evening fall,
Bring your chair and sit beside me,
'Neath the spreading lindens tall.
What of youth, with all its promise,
What of manhood, strong and bold,
What of age that creeps upon us,—
What do all of these unfold?

Time will tell you,—doubtless tell you,—
Time will tell you all of this.

Hast thou seen some glimpse of promise
In the scriptures, thou hast read,
Has this hope of life eternal
'Neath thy gladsome vision spread?
In thy heart an overflowing,
On thy face a saintly glee,—
Some sweet radiance of beauty
That the righteous only see.

Time will tell you,—surely tell you,—
Time will tell you everything.

What of all these ripened harvests
That are garnered in the sheaf,
And the oaken tree that slumbers
In the forest with its leaf;

What of all that's sifting downward,—
  Downward, downward, from the skies,
Nothing, nothing, nothing upward?—
  Nothing's ever seen to rise.

Aye, the spirit, who hath seen it,
Yet, it liveth in our souls,
And its precious admonition
All around us still is rife,
This will tell you,—sweetly tell you
All the mysteries of life.

THE ROSE

THERE is a voice in things, outspoken
In a way, and once I chanced to hear
The language of a flower:
"And I am but the rose," a tiny voice
Proclaimed beside my garden wall,
"And I am but the rose, and yet I symbol
More than tongue can ever tell:
Arrayed in gorgeous hues of green
And purple cast, my buds my babies are;
And bloom, my daughters fair; and in my stem
Is seen the sturdy strength of man.
And such is my command, the grave and gay
Alike fill all the paths of earth that lead
To my abode.
And some with gladness come
And press me to their hearts, and smiling
Go their way.
And others, crushed with grief,
Around me linger long, and speak
In whispers

Low of some departed friend.
And so I represent the whole of life and death,
And these, I gather all within my glad embrace,
And standing thus between the altar and the tomb,
For every youthful soul I ring the years
Around with endless merriment,
And unto those who come with feeble steps and slow
I point them to the hopes and
Changeless promises the Lord hath written down
Within his sacred book.

SALINDA HANLON'S SONG

There's a beautiful spring
Near my grandfather's barn,
'Neath a wide-spreading oak in the shade,
And a glimpse of his cot
Overlooking the tarn,
Where we all bowed our heads when he prayed.

Like some picture of home
As it hangs on the wall,
How the mind wanders down through the years
To the marge of that forest
So graceful and tall,
Demanding its tribute of tears!

And it floods all my room
As I kneel by my bed;
And it seems I am back there to-night,
In the chamber of death
I am bowing my head,
By the flare of a dim candle light.

And I see our old church
That we built on the hill,
  And our schoolhouse, a mile down the road;
And dim in the distance,
The smoke of the mill,
  And a glimpse of the streamlet that flowed.

And all of our family,
Surrounding the hearth,
  And the table, that's spread for the meal,
Awaiting with jollity,
Music and mirth,
  The toilers, that come from the field.

OLD LIGE REAMS

My friend and I went out to walk
  Along the village street,
And chat with old acquaintances
  That one will often meet.

The day was soft and beautiful,
  And as we strode along,
Way down around the corner far,
  We heard a bawdy song.

And soon we passed the chapel by,
  With bolted doors, a-near,
Locked up, they said, for want of funds,—
  Which mostly went for beer.

And next we found along the way,
  The ruins of the rink,
That made a deal of money once,
  Which now is spent for drink.

As well the tavern, that had been
A beauty in its day,
But long ago, the house was sold,
Because it didn't pay.

And business blocks that once had seen
The surging of the crowd,
So packed they were in other times,
The salesmen never bowed;

A refuge now,—the most of them,—
And all their windows broke,
Where idle loafers congregate
To spin their yarns and smoke.

And many places bore this sign,
Suspended from a nail:
"My wife got sick. We're leaving town;
This property's for sale."

And so we sauntered on our way,
Until at last we'd come
To Reams's place, around the block,
That sells the people rum.

And in we went,—my friend and I,—
To look the topers o'er,
And here we found a slaughter house,
That slaughters many poor.

And, my! the air we found in there,
It almost took our breath,
"That's him," said I; "that's old Lige Reams
That's drunk himself to death."

And once he owned a vast estate,
Extending far and wide,
More beautiful than aught I've seen
In all the countryside.

And rich he was, and then his home
Bore every modern art,
But after dissipating long,
He broke his people's heart.

From speculation, years ago,
He turned to drinking wine,
And this at last, his friends declare,
Has robbed him of his mind.

Of all the horrid things in life
That I have ever found,
The farmer is who tries to farm
And run a joint in town.

And such a story, that he tells,
About his passing wealth,
And this has helped, beyond a doubt,
To undermine his health.

I've heard him tell it o'er and o'er,
When on his way from town,
All smeared with mud, beside the road,
Where he was often found.

And now, perhaps, as soon as he
Has drained that glass of gin,
He'll try his best to hold this crowd,
And tell it o'er again.

See that! By heck! before he starts
He always takes a chew,
And then, maybe, he'll pass the plug
Around to me and you.

"Hey there, you blatant blatherskites!—
Go seat yourselves apart,
And let me tell these friends of mine
'Bout Darby and my cart."

That's it all right. He's off again,
I've heard it now for years,
And sometimes ere he's through with it,
His face is bathed in tears.

Let's take a seat and stop awhile,
And hear the story through;
I've known him since a little child,
And know the story's true.

And since he's settled in his chair,
And down his glass he's put,
He throws one leg across his knee
And trots his clumsy foot.

And now he straightens up a bit,
And frowns upon the din,
And quiet sweeps the room around,
As Lige is off again.

"Long years ago, I owned a colt,—
When yet a little boy,—
That gave to me, for care and feed,
A world of youthful joy.

"And this, my lords, was highly bred,
From pure Kentucky whip,
And Blue Grass, sirs, was all the grass
I ever saw him nip.

"And father said he wanted me
To look ahead and plan,
So when the colt became a horse,
I, too, would be a man.

"And all the plans he ever laid
Were realized so soon!
For I moved out to Iowa
Along the River Coon.

"And in the wagon that I drove,
I brought the finest girl
The Lord e'er made,—I'm sure of that,
Since first he formed the worl'.

"And here it was we drove our stakes,
And built ourselves a home,
And so delighted were we both,
We vowed we'd never roam.

"The lands were new and beautiful,
And spread so far away,
The eye swept at a single leap
A thousand tons of hay.

"And here we broke the sodden lands,
Without a modern gang,
And while our oxen drew the plow,
We rode behind and sang.

"And then we broadly cast the seed,
Among the furrows deep,
And when the golden harvest came,
The reapers came to reap.

"And still our range was limitless
For cattle o'er the plains,
And fast we gathered through the years
A hoard of golden gains.

"And lands were cheap, and neighbors few,
And these so far away,
In driving out to make our calls,
We often rode all day,

"And here I'd buy a piece of land,
And there another one,
Until, in time, it seemed to me,
They reached from sun to sun.

"And oft, so occupied, I was,
I'd scarcely change a stitch,
And then the news went floating out,—
'Old Lige is getting rich.'

"And while the years went gliding by
As pleasant as the May,
Around our cottage came at last
Some little ones to play.

"And, oh, those early pleasant times!
So oft they come again,
And whisper, whisper in my ears
Of things that might have been.

"And then it was, the war broke out,
Between the North and South,
And horrid tales of carnage leaped
From every human mouth.

"And prices rose and rose again,
And still they went on higher;
And so you see, in spite of me,
They set my mind afire.

"And speculation grew so rife,
Ere long, I joined its ranks,
And presently I found myself
Tied up in sev'ral banks.

"Of corn and cotton,—blast the rot!
I mortgaged all I had,
And when our banks all failed at once,
I went completely mad.

"That day, my friends, I ceased to live,
Since then I eat my bread;
But all the country round about
Will tell you that I'm dead.

"And so I am, so far as life
And pleasures ever note,
For I am but a bunch of trash,
Upon the stream afloat.

"And here it was that I commenced
My wanderings alone,
For all the lands that I possessed
Had now forever flown.

"And long, in some secluded spot,
I'd sit, with folded arms,
Or ramble on, and farther on,
Among my many farms.

"And now, all kinds of trouble came,
I never saw before.
And soon the news came flying back:
'Old Lige is getting poor.'

"And long I pondered suicide
When I'd go out to walk;
But every time I'd raise my knife
My hand would always balk.

"And then I sold my chattels off,
And everything I found,
And what few dollars I had left
I hid them in the ground.

"And while I weaker grew each day,
From worry and distress,
I found a monster worse than this,—
That demon, drunkenness!

"For now, one day, I went to town,
And bought a keg of wine,
Unlike the one the Savior made
In Galilee so fine.

"And then I bought another keg,
And soon I bought some more,—
And such a pile of empty kegs,
I never had before,

"Between two evils now I stood,
And both had swiftly come:
The one, it offered suicide,
The other proffered rum.

"And death stood there and swung his scythe,
Keen cutting as a knife,
And rum held out, with trembling hand,
A bottle for my life.

"And there I stood in wonderment,
Between this double hell,
And then I fought with suicide,
Before I, wounded, fell.

"And still I made a blunder here,
That's filled me with regret,—
In choosing drink, instead of death,—
That I shall ne'er forget.

"But I was younger then, by far,
Than what I am to-day,
And so the wine that's beautiful,—
It led my feet astray.

"And all is lost, and ever yet,
I worship still my farm,
And while it lies in other hands,
It holds for me a charm,

"No other home, in all the world,
Can ever hold for me,—
Regardless of its ornaments,
Whatever they may be.

"But now, among these ruins thick,
That all around me fell,
One thing I had, I made a vow,
That I would never sell.

"And so I kept my father's horse,—
Old Darby was his name,—
For somehow, yet, it seemed to me,
He'd help to hide my shame.

"For, while affection for the home
May spread her wings and fly,
This love goes out to something else;
For love can never die.

"This may be Greek to younger ones,
But older ones, of course,
Have often seen the driver fall
Below his driving horse.

"And so it was with me and mine,
I'd often make him speed,
To raise my self a notch or two,
In showing off my steed.

"And round the country much we went,
To distant parts alone,
For trouble seeks to hide herself,
Where she is little known.

"And then one day I hitched him up,
To drive him down to town,
And as we jogged along the road,
Now what, think you, we found?

"A swarm of bees; and soon they lit
All o'er my horse's back,
And then I struck him such a blow,
And gave him such a crack,

"The cart he kicked, and off he went,
And left me in the road,—
And then the bees all lit on me
As helpless as a toad.

"Yes, on he went, and went to town,
And reaching it by noon,
He stopped to snort and blow a while,
In front of my saloon.

"And some one turned the horse around,
And here he comes again,
And, Lord! I thought of everything
That constitutes a sin.

"But when he reached the bees and me,
He kinder *geed!* and *hawed!*
And then he came straight up to us,
And there he stood and pawed;

"And every time the horse would paw,
The bees would sting me more,
And 'Gosh!' said I, 'I guess these two
Are bound to get me, sure.'

"Meanwhile, I reasoned with him long,
While laying like a chunk;
But still he shook his head and pawed,—
Convinced that I was drunk.

"He'd got me out of scrapes before,
But, Mister, if you please,
I shuddered when I saw my horse
A-working with the bees,

"But close at hand some branches hung,—
A cluster, with their green,—
And presently the bees left me,
In following the queen.

"And, say, I loved that dear old horse,
We'd been on many a spree,
And often, ere I'd reach the ditch,
I'd tie him to a tree,

"And there he'd stand, and wait and wait,
And presently he'd neigh,
Then I'd wake up and bluster around,
To find my horse some hay,

"And when he'd eaten all of this,
And I had drained my wines,
He'd rub his nose against my face,
And motion toward the lines.

"And on we'd go, along the road,
My Darby horse and me,
So deeply in the darksome night,
That neither one could see.

"But when we'd come in sight of home,
We'd always find a light,
Placed there for us by loving hands,—
A beacon in the night.

"And, regardless of my drunkenness,
Or how, or when I came,
This angel of another world
Was always just the same.

"Through heat and cold, and raging storms,
No matter still how late,
This wife that was so kind and true
Would meet me at the gate.

"And when we'd found our way inside,
I'd stumble o'er the chairs,
And then, with endless kindness still,
She'd help me up the stairs.

"And often now she'd hide her face
Behind a flood of tears,
And then I'd promise o'er and o'er,—
As I had done for years.

"And so the seasons came and went,
But I kept on pursuin'
The path that leaves us all at last
Upon the brink of ruin.

"And then my horse got old, you know,
He'd stumble along the way,
Just like we do, as age comes on,
With feebleness, and gray.

"And now old Darby's dead and gone,
And left me here alone,
And so's my wife, my children, too,—
And all my friends have flown.

"And then, afoot, to town I'd go,
As when the roads were fine,
And sometimes I'd be gone for days,
To buy a flask of wine.

"And once, when I was musing o'er
My troubles and remorse,
It seemed to me that something said,
'Why not a hobby horse?'

"And this I made, the best I could,
From boards, and broken post,
And when I had him all complete,
Ye gods! and what a ghost!

"And then it was I hitched him up,
And placed the cart behind,
And there I'd sit and ride all day,
To pacify my mind.

"And when the clouds grew dark and low,
And rains came pouring down,
I'd hail some farmer on the road,
And ask the way to town.

"And then my horse, I'd threaten him
With my old cowhide whip,
And when I found him slowing down,
I'd let profanity slip.

"And there I'd sit and ride all day,
Amid the raging blast,
In calling up the years that's gone,
And dreaming o'er the past,—

"And of my horse, and friends and farm,
And of my children kind,
And graves would loom among the gloom,
And then, again, the wine.

"And here I'd jostle my cart again,
And rattle the wheels behind.
A-cantering down to Jolica town,
To buy a flask of wine.

"And then, one day, I lost my way,
And wandered round and round,
But pleased I was, because I thought
That I was nearing town.

"And friends of mine, they saw my plight,
And came and took me in,
And, oh, so pleasant burned the hearth!
It seemed like home again.

"And still, the evening dragged along,
The clock was striking ten,
And here I bowed and bowed me out,
And said I'd call again.

"And straightway now I sought my cart,
And left the miles behind,
A-cantering down to Jolica town
To buy a flask of wine,

" 'To buy a flask of wine,' I'd sing,—
'To buy a flask of wine!
A-cantering down to Jolica town
To buy a flask of wine!'

"And then my shack, I'd often seek,—
My shack, so cold and still,—
And there I've prayed, and prayed aloud,
For rest upon the hill.

"And some time, when the snows pile high
Around the lonesome tree,
Where I have lain and froze to death,
As stiff as one can be,

"Some passerby along the way,—
Or skaters on the streams,—
May point me out, and smiling say:
'The end of old Lige Reams!' "

THE CIVIL ENGINEER

To all who ask of me,
I have but one reply,
For mine is a life of toil.
And here, among these fields
Of endless magnitude,
Year after year, I still pursue
These changeless mysteries.
For, mark you well, I have to do
With the upbuilding of the world.
And where these mountains pile
Their hoary peaks around,
With endless patience still
I cut the ways along,
That streams may onward flow
And trains pass through to other lands.
And where these bogs abound,
And vapors hide from view

The dismal waters wide,
Along some grand canal,
I drive my grading-stake,
And, lo! another vast domain
Awaits the pioneer.
And while I onward go
Adown the passing years,—
Equipped with every phase
Of scientific truth
That mighty minds have dug
From out the rubbish round,—
I lay my plans so well
That few have e'er escaped
My ultimate desire.
In proof of this, go East,
And ever eastward far,
Until you meet again
The rising of the sun;
Or move along the lines
Of travel to the West,
Where, in majestic sweep,
The star of empire takes
Her everlasting way,
And you will find me there.
Outwailing yet aloud,
From all the lapse of time,
I speak a varied language still
From aqueduct and bridge
And many a moldering heap,
That history's long forgot.
And yet, amid all this,
I ever labor on,
That all the world may say:
"Where yesterday the howling wolf
Awoke the dismal echoes of the night,
To-day a brilliant city stands."

Yes, mine's a life of toil.
For oft, while others slumber on,
In thought, I'm stealing down
The dim highways of the past,
And here and there I drag to light
The rude skelèton
Of some forgotten age.
For mine has ever been
A complexity of problems,
And ever must remain
A never-ending string
Of varied complications.
And yet, among them all,
I find some pleasure still
In every passing hour.
For oft,—when night comes down
And lays her baleful hand
Upon the light of day,
And silence grips again
The busy marts of trade,—
The midnight hour comes
And sounds aloud her gong
Ere yet, I am aware.
Nor do I often hear
The rattling of the car
Upon the stony street,
That sends a tremor through
The room in which I sit.
But let the past go by,
With all its vagueness swept
Beyond the grasp of man.
To meet the problems here
Confronting us to-day;
And try to penetrate
Those hidden mysteries,
The future must unfold,

Aye, that's the engineer
The world is looking for!
And so I find myself
Repeating o'er and o'er,
To all inquiring minds:
"Mine is a life of toil."
And buoyed up by this,
And my perseverance here,
I've shaken this staid old world
As a child does her rattle-box.
For bear you this in mind,
That I am the factor still,
And I'm the influence,
And I'm the guide-post
On all of the highways
And byways of the earth;
And always, here I stand
And cry me out aloud
To every passerby:
"Turn to the right, my friend,
For this is the better way."
And in these problems wrought,
I've found a happy life;
Forever still I live,
As the thought of my soul lives,
And I warp as it warps,
While I gravitate to the brink
Of an ultimate perfection,
Like the fabric that flows
From Time's unchanging loom.

A TRAGEDY OF HUDSON BAY

One eve of late,
Before my grate,
To pass the time away,
I heard again
What long has been
The theme of Hudson Bay.

'Twas winter time,
When sleigh-bells chime
Delightfully and grand,
And snows lie deep,
And wild storms sweep
Across that northern land.

And far away
In Canada,
Where travelers are lost,
And great strong ships,
Beyond their slips,
Upon the rocks are tossed.

In days of yore,
Long, long before
The immigrant had come
To plan, and work,
And build the kirk,
And make the factories hum,—

A vent'rous man
Conceived a plan,
  Northwest his course to lay;
And, with his train,
He crossed the plain
  In search of Hudson Bay.

And where they found
The richest ground,
  They took, each one, a claim,
And on the silt,
A village built,
  And gave to this a name,—

But miles away
From Hudson Bay,
  Upon the prairies vast,
And here they wrought
With pleasure fraught,
  Until their lives were past:

Out where the air
And dash and dare
  Of such a life as this
Will tinge and flood
With crimson blood
  The cheeks of every miss.

And where the soul
Grows strong and bold,
  With never once a fear;
And where each mile's
An endless wild,
  Along that vast frontier.

And where the youth
Must prove the truth
  Of every prowess claimed,
Or lose the hand,
For which he's planned,
  And be forever shamed.

For maidens fair
Were plenty there,
  Around the countryside,
And bright and gay,—
I dare to say,—
  And fit for any bride.

And one fair maid,
While thus arrayed,
  Caused bitter rivalry,
Which grew and grew,
As things will do,
  As every one may see.

May Manton tall
Was known by all;
  With flashing eyes of blue,
As well no art
Could change her heart,
  That beat forever true.

And there was yet,—
Ere I forget,—
  Another in the land,
And he had sought,
And flowers brought,
  To gain the lady's hand.

And o'er and o'er,
Within her door,
  He'd called to hear her sing;
And then one day
He stole away,
  And bought a signet ring.

And others learned
That love still burned
  A flame in Willie's heart,
And long they strove
To wreck his love
  And drive the two apart.

But hate and scorn,
Alone were born,
  For those who interfered;
And clans arose
And came to blows,
  As older ones had feared.

And thus at last
The autumn passed,
  And nights grew long and cold,
And more, each man,
Who joined the clan,
  Grew desperately bold.

Then May and Will,
With cunning skill,
  They planned to steal away,
To reach the post,
Along the coast,—
  The post of Hudson Bay.

And so one night,—
One Christmas night,
  When storms blew loud amain,
May Manton now,
And Willie Dow,
  Essayed to cross the plain.

Though weary miles
And frightful tri'ls,
  They knew before them lay,
In such a flight,
That stormy night,
  In northern Canada.

But they were bold,
And friends they'd told
  To mention this no more,
But, oh! the storm,—
The awful storm,—
  That howled around their door!

But they were young
And highly strung,
  And boldly faced the gale,
And dared the storm
That hid each form
  Along the trappers' trail.

And vowing love,
They rose above
  The elements around,—
The while their steeds,
Of racing breeds,
  Sprang forward with a bound,

They disappeared,
With but a word
  Of farewell to their friends,
Who saw ahead
A scene of dread,
A frightful mission lends.

But scarce they'd gone
Their way upon,
  When others hove in sight,—
While curses fell,
And clanging bell
  Made hideous the night.

For now this clan
Had laid a plan
  To steal the maiden fair
And claim her hand,
As they had planned,
  Her vast estates to share.

So down the trail
Amid the gale,
  Two sleighs went dashing by,
While louder grew
The storm that blew,—
  And darker hung the sky.

And with this blast
Increasing fast
  The darkness of the night,
And not a rift
Above the drift
  To guide the lovers' flight,

With whip at play,
They held their way
  From intervening harm,
Till oft, I wot,
Some random shot
  Aroused them with alarm.

For close behind,
Through break and pine
  And gently sloping hill,
This outlaw band
That cursed the land
  Drew near, and nearer still.

And once they gained,
And near maintained
  The leading sleigh beside,
And, with a shout,
Two men sprang out,
  But missed the lovers wide.

And while their teams
And oaths and screams
  Lent horror to the night,
Yet May and Will
Escaped them, still
  Triumphant in their flight.

The night wore on,
But ere the dawn
  Of that eventful day
They passed the post
Along the coast,—
  The post of Hudson Bay.

For while the storm
Hid every form,
  Amid the darksome night,
And howling wolf
And flying hoof
  Pursued them in their flight,—

Out, o'er a field,
That lay concealed,
  They madly held their way,
Out o'er the ice,—
The rotten ice,—
  The ice of Hudson Bay.

And years have flown
Since this was known,
  And many Christmas days,
But not a word
Was ever heard
  From either of the sleighs.

And yet, they say,
That stormy bay
  Preserves this secret still,
Of how, and why,
They came to die,—
  And doubtless always will.

And so, each night,
Each Christmas night,
  In northern Canada,
This story old
Is often told,
  To pass the time away.

MY DOG AND I

Just why my dog should bark at night,
And whine and howl with all his might,
Has always been a mystery quite,
To me for years.

And why he leaps my team before,
And wags his tail before my door,
And seeks me out, and looks me o'er,
As oft he does.

And why my dog should love me so,
And watch me close, where'er I go,
And other things I'd like to know
About my dog.

For one, you see, he's got no bed,
Or place to lay his weary head,
And yet, he loves his master Ted,
For all of that.

And to me, still he's always true,
No matter what I say or do,
Nor does he have his days of blue,
As does my wife.

And so I've thought of this a heap,
And oft at night, before I sleep,
I con it o'er,—this mystery deep
About my dog.

And then, one day, we had a talk,
When he and I went out to walk,
Near by some cliffs, as white as chalk,
'Long down the road.

For we're as close as close can be;
I talk to him, and he to me,
So any one can plainly see
Just how we stand.

And when we'd talked awhile on game,
Another subject to me came,
But now, it seems an awful shame,
I spoke of this.

For then I said unto my dog,—
While I sat resting on a log,—
That old Tom Keets, who loves his grog,—
You watch him close.

A long time now, it seems to me,
My wife and Keets, as all can see,
They're just as thick as thick can be
When I'm not in.

And I'm afraid there's other Keets,
When I'm away she often meets,
Beside this one particular Keets
I speak about.

For late one eve,—of this I'm sure,—
A shadow passed across my door,
And likely, too, there were some more,
Not far away.

And will you watch, old Towser dear,
And will you watch, when I'm not near,
And shut one eye, so you'll appear
To be asleep?

"*Bow wow!*" said he, "I see your plan,"
Meanwhile, he stood and licked my hand,
"That's what I will,—I'll watch each man
For all I'm worth.

"For clear to me seems your appeal,
And well I know just how you feel,
'Cause other dogs have tried to steal
The bitch I love.

"No doubt you've seen these sneaks aroun',
Some bulls and fices, one's a houn',
And some are white, and some are brown,
A mongrel lot.

"And these are here most all the time,
And slobber out their strings of slime,
And there's not one that's worth a dime,
I venture that."

And while these two together stood,
Along the road beside the wood,—
These mutual friends of brotherhood,—
And talked it o'er,

Once more it was Old Towser said,
The while he growled and shook his head,
"If you'll provide some meat and bread
For me and mine,

"And club these curs from off the earth,
This mongrel horde of little worth,—
Not one of which could get a berth
That's worth a dang,—

"Why, then, I'll watch all day and night,
And howl and bark and scratch and bite
The whole of them, with all my might,
That's what I'll do.

"And you must do the same for me,
And use your gun, if need to be,—
And in the end I guess we'll see
Who runs this place."

And then I spoke to him and said,
"Sure, Tow, I'll furnish meat and bread,
And build a house, and make a bed,
Where you can sleep.

"And then I'll buy a band of brass,
Bright shining as the smoothest glass,
That all may see when e'er they pass,
The dog you are;

"For this will show your pedigree,
Plain written down so all can see,
And prouder then I'm sure you'll be
Among your friends.

"And, Tow, when all of this is done,
I'll buy some buck and load my gun,
And then, by heck! we'll have some fun,
Among these curs.

"And every hound, and every bull,
I'll fill their hides so 'tarnal full,—
Again they'll never have a pull
Around your bitch.

"And when in time your life may end,
On this one thing you may depend,
I'll rear a stone, inscribed 'My Friend,'
Above your grave.

"And while I live, I'll think of you,
And keep your tomb all fresh and new,
For no one else has been as true
As you have been."

Then Tow went leaping o'er the ground,
And whirled him to and fro around,
And barked so loud, he well-nigh drowned
The noisy train.

And then once more to me he come,
And hung his head, and seemed so glum,
As like men do,—as like to some,
Who stop to think.

And when I saw he seemed inclined
To speak the burden of his mind,
'Twas then I spoke in accents kind,
And said: "Go on,"

And down he sat, and kinder bowed,
Then raised his head, and howled aloud,
As though he felt extremely proud
To have a chance.

"And how," said he, "about that bird?
Your wife, she's got a parrot bird,
And how he swears,—but then you've heard
Him doing that.

"And, Ted, look out, she's watching you,
And has that bird to help her, too,
And my! the things they often do,
When you're away.

"For oft when you are round the brush,
That bird screams out, and makes a rush,
Until your wife, she bids him hush,
For fear you'll hear.

"And then, she takes him from the cage,
While both are in a crazy rage,
And what they say would fill a page—
I venture that.

"And o'er and o'er, I've heard him swear,
About some lady, young and fair,
And then your wife, she'll pull her hair,
And have a fit.

"And while that bird screams loud and hoarse,
And shakes the cage with all his force,
Your wife, she talks about divorce,
And rings her hands.

"And then, as oft when I draw nigh,
The bird turns round and asks me why,
Or else screams out a frightful cry,
And points at me

"And says: 'You damned old spotted cur!
And what the hell you doing here?
It seems to me you're always near,
When e'er we talk.

"And then your wife so oft she's said,
While hurling stovewood at my head:
'I'll put some poison in your bread,—
That's what I'll do.'

"So, while this bird gets dainties sweet
All strewn around beneath his feet,
She flings to me some rotten meat,
And says: 'Begone!'

"And, Ted, I've known of this so long,
It's got so awful rank and strong,
From what you said, I thought it wrong
To hold my tongue.

"And while we are so far away,
I thought perhaps to-day's the day,
And time, and place, when I should say
Just what I have.

"But don't you tell what I have said,
For if you do, it's poisoned bread,
Or else some stovewood on my head,
As oft before.

"And, Ted, my heart goes out to you,
For like as not, you're kind and true,
But things like these are nothing new
For married folk.

"And now, before we move away,
About these things I've told to-day,—
I'd like to hear what you've to say
About all this.

"And if you grieve, I'll grieve with you,
And do whate'er you tell me to,
And until death, you'll find me true
As any dog.

"And in the end, if you should find
It best to leave your home behind,
I'll still remain forever kind,
As I have been.

"And, Ted,—my dear old master Ted,"—
And here, down low he hung his head,
And mused awhile, and then he said,
"I'd better not."

And forth once more he, circling, sprung,
As if upon some trail he hung,
Meanwhile, expanding wide his lung,
He bayed aloud.

And to and fro, and back he came,
As if in sight of fleeing game,
Except he circled much the same,
As on he went.

Amazed, at last I called him back,
And gave his ears a gentle crack,
For now to me, it seemed, alack!
He'd daffy gone.

And then at me he slyly sent
A frowning look of discontent;
And well I knew just what it meant,
And held my tongue.

Except, in gentle words and kind,
I urged him on to speak his mind
About something he seemed inclined
To hold in check.

But still he stood and shook his head,
As though his heart from sorrow bled,
And then, once more, he firmly said,
"I'd better not."

And straightway now I left my log,
And, like a sailor full of grog,
I clenched my fist and trounced my dog,
For what he said.

And then he rose, without a word,
And such a howl I never heard,—
So sad it was, and awful weird,—
It made me think.

And o'er his features, soft and bland,
I saw a troubled look expand,
And yet, he stood and licked my hand,
For all of that.

And then he raised his head to mine,
Without the semblance of a whine,
And straightway now, in accents fine,
He told me this:

"And do you know, my master Ted,
I've told the truth in all I've said,
And don't you think I'm better dead
Than living thus.

"And should I tell the same of you,—
And every word was gospel true,—
I'd like to know just what you'd do
About these things.

"For I'm afraid to eat or drink,
Nor do I dare to sleep a wink,
For lately, now, I've come to think
She'll get me, sure.

"And every time when you're away,
I hear these threats all through the day,
And just last eve I heard her say,
'I've got the stuff.'

"And further, Ted, I'll tell you true,
I've heard her say the same of you,
And then that bird, he'll cackle too,
And saw: 'Amen!'

"And so it's plain that I and you
Have got to see this trouble through,
And what you think we'd better do
About all this?"

And then I called him to my side,
And gazing at him, open-eyed,
I asked him if he ever lied
About my wife.

And while we two a-jangling stood,
Out there along the shady wood,
In madness now, I thought I should
Destroy my dog.

And in my rage I drew my knife,
And threats I made against his life,
Because he dared to charge my wife
With murdering.

And turning now, I plainly saw
His teeth, within his upper jaw,
And pointing off, he raised his paw,
And said: "Come on!

"Come on, and let us damn with hate,
This bird and wife, your bosom mate,
And wreck their lives and seal their fate
Forevermore!

"For they are each a cringing slave,
Unfitted for the true and brave.
And come; let's drive them to their grave,
And leave them there,

"Asleep, within some potters lot,
Way off in yon neglected spot,
Where they can rest, and be forgot
By all their friends!"

And plainer now,—and plain as day,—
These fogs before me passed away,
And ere I knew before me lay
The naked truth,—

The hidden truth I'd failed to see.
This monster here that beckoned me,
This prince of hell, grim jealousy,
That caused my fall.

And when all this began to dawn,
I turned, to find my dog was gone;
And yet this phantom struggled on,
Around me still.

This nasty myth, this airy mite,
That haunts us all by day and night,
And seemeth still to take delight
In what it does.

And this I've seen in pigs a-sty,
And winging birds in passing by,
And beasts afield, when some wild cry
Presages strife.

And this was not my dog I saw,—
This thing that made him lift his paw,—
But something else, an unseen law
That grips us all.

And rambling on with brazen din,
It open flung the gates again,
And let the fiends of darkness in,
To plead their cause.

And plainly now they said to me:
"Hast thou not eyes? Canst thou not see
This breach that lies 'tween 'thee and she'
Still wider grows,—

"As like a stream that onward flows,
And deeper yet and deeper grows?
And were you men, you'd come to blows
Beyond a doubt.

"And well you know this much is true
While in your ways you still pursue,
Your world is but your dog and you,
From day to day.

"And she as well, she hath her bird,
And oft it is your name is sneered,
And from you both, there's ne'er a word
To cheer you on.

"But know this much,—you're not alone,
Like snarling dogs that guard their bone,
For storms like these have often blown,
Before your day.

"In lands remote, where'er you look,
And on the page of every book,
For ages gone, this thing has shook
The very throne.

"Not always thus,—a dog or bird,—
As with you two has overheard;
But some sly wink, or loving word,
Has turned the trick.

"And plunged the race in sore distress
Has some old king, or flippant Bess,
Which nations oft have failed to guess
For years to come."

And while I stood and conjured long,
A host of things began to throng,
And all I saw,—and all was wrong
Beyond a doubt.

And such a pang I never felt,
As from a blow, the truth had dealt,
And soon my tears began to melt
Around remorse,—

Remorse for things, since past and gone,
When manhood first began to dawn,
And life and hope went flowing on
Like some mild stream,

And backward now, and backward fast,
The scenes of youth around me massed,
And ere they all before me passed,
I found relief.

Relief from all those ugly things,
That fill the heart with aching stings,
And unto many often brings
A ruined life.

And thus relieved, I made a vow
That brings a lasting pleasure now.
And wherefore this? and why? and how?
I must be brief.

For I had seen, as all should see,
In bird and dog and her and me,
A cheerless world of jealousy
Around our home.

The dog was jealous of the bird;
The bird was jealous of the dog;
My wife was jealous, too, of me;
And I of her.

A never-ending jealous lot,
Forever boiling like a pot,
And day and night we kept it hot
Continually.

And now to me this thought occurred:
Before we had this dog and bird,
We two, we never had a word
That caused distress.

And then it was I turned around,
And home I went, with hurried bound;
For well I knew that I had found
The truth at last.

And to my wife, these things I told,
Without reserve, in language bold,
And glad I was to now behold
Her smiling face.

And while I pointed to the past,
Within my arms I held her fast,
And both of us, we found at last
The road to peace.

'Twere long to tell how clear and bright
Around us shone this gladsome light,
Compared with that long, darksome night
We left behind.

And let me warn you ere I close:
The world is full of heartless woes,
And this is only one that shows
Along the way.

But this, if still allowed to grow,—
This can a host of troubles show,
And of this one before I go
I wish to say:

Beware the bird of scandal tongue,
When social intercourse is sprung,
For this, alas! has often flung
Its evils far.

And birds there are without a wing,
Who pride themselves on tattling,
And leave behind some deadly sting,—
And go their way.

And dogs as well among our race,
Of low deceit and cunning face,
And all around they spread disgrace,
Where'er they go.

And of all such, you should beware,—
All those who would some secret bare,—
And clench your fist, and turn you square,
And walk away.

And lend your hand to minimize
This storm that threatens many skies.
And all who do are wisdom wise
In every land.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?[1]

It means conformation to ideals of America, her laws, her customs, and the American form of government, the fundamental principles of which are found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America. It means representation in deliberative bodies, and it means a free school and an education for every child. It means liberality; it means toleration; it means the Brotherhood of Man. It means a broadening and a deepening of that love that we have for our own, for those in distant lands. It means a definite statement, with definite aims in view; it means attachment; it means patriotism, and it means abiding faith in home and native land. It means kindness; it means sympathy, and it means charity for every friendly soul beneath the Stars and Stripes. It means the elevation of our race,—in the physical, in the moral, and in the intellectual world. And, in times of stress, it means living for these, fighting for these, and dying for these things upon the field of honor.

Won't you come with us, and be an American, that in the hour of death you may say, with one of old: "I've fought a good fight, I've kept the faith; henceforward, there is laid up for me treasures in heaven, that rust cannot corrupt nor thieves break through and steal."

[1] In answer to Baltimore.

THE PLEA OF ARTHUR ALDEN

May I not live again, dear Lord?
May I not live again,—
And leave behind me here
These long and tedious hours,
So burdened with distress;
And every ache and pain,
And all this dreadful gloom
That comes, as if in glee,
To claim me as their own?
And why? Behold my feet,—
These useless feet of mine,—
These feet of other days,
Which twinkled like the stars
And ever gloried in
The swiftness of the chase!
But now,—alas for these!
So dull and dead they are,
They cry them out aloud
For every passing crutch.
And yet, how like they are
My pale and puny hands,—
These hands that gladly sought
The labors of the fields,
And took such keen delight
In every manly sport,—
These drawn and twisted hands!
These weak and trembling hands
Have lost their cunning now,
And come to tell, with sobs,
Their story of decay.
And yet, full brothers they

And first of kin they are
To these, my dull and listless ears:
These watchmen, at their post,
These trusty sentinels,
That ever pointed out
The dangers that abound,
In all the walks of life.
These faithful ears of mine
That once so quickly caught
The rustling of the leaf,
And thrilled my very soul
With endless melodies,
As when the merry birds
Made vocal all the woods,
That spread themselves around
My early cottage home.
And, sacrificing all,
These, too, have come to lay
Their weary burden down
Beside my sightless eyes.
These brilliant orbs of blue!
These windows of the soul,
These bright, and sparkling eyes,
Of childhood, long ago.
These constant servants, mine,
That ever sought afar
Among the depths of space,
And laid by treasures here
For thoughts in after years.
And must these ever lie
In utter darkness thus?
And be content to know
In other times gone by
They labored with a zeal
Among the starry depths,
And helped with problems there,

That Nature loves to hide
Among the cosmos deep?
These eyes, these sightless eyes,
And have they come at last
Unto the brink of life,
And taken their last review
Of every changing scene,
And hill, and glade, and vale,
And every passing cloud
That gently floats away
Upon the evening breeze?
If so, farewell, bright world,
To all that vigor knew,—
When vision swept afar
The mysteries of space,
And left a passing gleam
Of pleasant memories.
But now, away with this!
Away with every thought
That mortal vision bounds.
For on beyond, I look,
Beyond the distant star,
And hope to find in this
Some lasting treasure there
That time cannot efface.

And what are all of these
Piled high around my room?
Behold this vast array
Of medications here,
And what are all of these
But vain and useless hopes?
Can these deceive the mind,
And make believe that life
Within these nostrums lies;
The very thought of this,

The irony of fate,
A bubble swept along
Upon the passing stream.
As well we might decry
The setting of the sun,
Or seek to stay the tides
Upon the ocean there.
And so I bide me here
As best I can to-day,
Amid this swirling throng
Of transitory things;
And hope to find ere long
A better life beyond.
And what conjectures here
Fill out the passing time?
And what enormous swing
Between these two extremes,—
The swing of pleasures now,
And then again the swing
That ever outward goes,
And ends, I know not where.
And yet, amid all this—
Bright gleaming in between
The darkness of the hour,—
A never-failing source
Of consolation comes
And drives me on to ask:
May I not live again, dear Lord?
May I not live again
A life more beautiful than this,
Ere yet these eyes went forth
To join this silent tongue?
This vague and useless thing,
This hesitating tongue!
This clumsy tongue it was
That sent its warnings oft

Adown the marble halls,
And roused to life again
The lethargy of men:
This caustic member here,
That ever forged ahead
To meet some daring foe,—
Or else, mayhap, it was
This softly pleading tongue,
When honors claimed the day,
And strife was swept aside
By gentleness of speech.
But let occasion rise,
And once again was heard
This acrimonious tongue;
And, like a storm, it broke
Amid the thunderings;
And, laying down the law
Before some cringing horde,
It filled with dire alarm
The enemies of State,
And sent a quake of fear
Through every guilty soul.
But now I grieve to tell;
For now this useless tongue
Has ceased its babblings bold,
And waits the final call
To pleasures on beyond,—
Beyond the pale of man,
And ever on, beyond
These frightful sufferings.
O Lord, who sent me here
Among this field of thorns,
And no provision made
To guard against distress,
Until I reach at last
The bosom of my God?

And so I plead for life
Beyond this brazen thief
That comes to steal away
My every vital part.
This enemy of mine
That seems delighted still
With every ache and pain;
This demon leading on
Within my being here!
This wanton reveler
That glides about my room,
With malice in his heart,
And, ere I am aware,
He strikes, and strikes again
With many a cruel stab.
And, plying thus his trade,
He makes the gladsome day
A horror to behold,
And fills the quiet night
With endless miseries.
And this reserved for me!
And this for every man
Who weeps aloud at birth,
And weeping on his way,
He passes into death.
And here he comes again,
This messenger of doom,
And swings aloft his scythe,
And with delight proclaims
My last remaining hour.
This heartless cavalier,
That goes from home to home
And leaves a flood of tears
On every smiling face.
This vile and shapeless thing
That none can e'er escape!

This horrid beast of prey
That tears me with his fangs
Like as a vulture might!
And how I hate him still
With all my throbbing heart.
Where justice sits enthroned,
And honors lead the way,
To die upon the field,
As like a soldier bold,
Is but a passing thought!
But when Old Age comes by
And calmly sits him down
Within my chamber here,
I am beside myself
With never-ending fears.
And what a thought is this,—
A woeful sounding thought,—
That throws a pall of gloom
Across the paths of all,
And racks the strongest frame
With endless tremblings!
Decrepitude, aye, that word,
Of all the words I've known,
The most distressing still!
For while I slumber oft
In undisturbed repose,
Unbidden now, it comes,
And lays its blighting hands
On all that I possess:
Upon these organs here,
So splendidly equipped
For every useful phase
Of man's eternal needs;
Yes, upon each one of these.
And on my hopes as well,
Which ever bore me on

Amid the changing scenes
Of all the passing years.
Yes, on every one of them!
And for my very life
Day after day it comes,
Until the whole is gone.
Decrepitude, O Decrepitude!
How like a ghost you are!
And still you laugh aloud
At all my locks and keys;
And ever thus you stab
And stab and maim again,
And why?—to gratify a whim?
Or lies there far beyond
My very deepest thought,
Some blessing that awaits
My tardy footsteps still?—
A something hidden here
Within the infinite,—
Some blessing, let me trust,
Some blessing in disguise.
If so, a welcome then,
To all that Age can bring,
That death may sooner come
And claim me as her own!
And while grave doubts arise
Amid this crumbling clay,—
And boding images
Around me flaunt their wares,—
Forever still I find myself
Repeating o'er and o'er,
And ever, o'er and o'er:

May I not live again, dear Lord?
May I not live again
In some celestial realm,

Where sorrows never come
To cloud my after years,
Nor fear, nor pain, nor death
May lay their blighting hands
On aught that I possess?
This sturdy manhood gone,
This buoyant spirit crushed,
This vitalizing force
A remnant of the past!
And all of these as well,—
This fast decaying bulk,
And dwindling energies
Of limb and frame and brain,—
Aye, that's it,—at last!
This poor, deluded brain,
And failing faculties!
This store of reason gone,
This citadel of earth
That stood upon the sand,—
This fortress of the soul
In mute submission now
To God's eternal law;
This thing of grasp and strength
That sat in judgment long
And bowed him down to none!
But now,—alas for this!—
This ruined castle here,
This glimpse of glories gone,
This wreckage strewn around
In moldering decay!
This monumental mind,
This councilor of State,
This king upon his throne,
How pitiful he seems
With every vestment gone.
How like he is to-day

How like a little child
That's lost upon the lawn!
How like a suckling babe
That ever cries aloud
In searching for its Ma!
And, too, this bleeding lung,
And palpitating heart,—
For all of these have come
To reckon with the years;
And turning, one and all,
They call them out aloud
For help that lies beyond
The puny hand of man.

May I not live again, dear Lord,—
May I not live forever?

MEMORIES

To-day I was thinking,
And dreaming, and drinking
A wee little draught
From the dregs of the past,
When o'er me came dashing,
And leaping, and crashing,
Some scenes from my childhood,
In years that have passed.

"Oh, sweet is the childhood
Of dreamland and wildwood!"
Transfixed by its beauties
I, whispering, said;
While onward before me,
Around me, and o'er me,
An endless procession
Of memories sped.

Companions of past time,
Alas! since the last time
I met you at evening
  And bade you farewell,
So many have left me
And sorely bereft me,—
I'm lost in my sorrows
  And scarcely can tell.

And yet, of this number
A-gone and a-slumber,
Who early in manhood
  Were called to their rest,
I'll mention Frank Clayton
And Everet Dayton,—
And one was my lover,
  The truest and best.

And others before me,
Around me, and o'er me,
In memory's fancy
  I saw in the crowd;
With jesture and smiling,
My spirit beguiling,
  And some in the flesh yet,
  And some in the shroud.

And, oh! for this childhood
Of dreamland and wildwood
That haunts us forever
  From evening till dawn,—
When storms break around us,
And problems confound us,
We seek in our sorrows
  The days that are gone.

THE MAID IN BLUE

Some maids there are who wear the blue,
Advising us they're always true,
But, aye, my friends, whate'er you do,
Beware, beware!

And when you see this outward sign,
Let not deception fog your mind
For, sure, you see, she may design
To throw you down.

For once upon a time I knew
A lady dressed in robes of blue,
And still, it seems she was not true,—
For all of that.

And why? Just note that human play
On further down along the way,
And in the end perchance you'll say:
"She was a cheat."

That is, you know, if this be wrong,
That she unfolds the ways along,
And here it is, and just as strong
As one could wish:

'Twas Betty dear, you've seen her oft,—
The maid who holds her head aloft,
And when she speaks, her voice is soft
As gentle spring.

And Betty, once she laid a plan,—
At least like this the story ran,
And vows she made she'd have a man
Of varied worth.

And yet she failed in some of this,—
When after years had brought no bliss,—
In just one way, and that was this:
A mother's pride;

A pride, in every child that's born,
With sprightly moods that may adorn,
Instead of one that many scorn
From day to day.

So, tumbling downward, went her plan,
Like others since our race began,
But with her blue she fooled her man,
And had her way.

And years before she sought the sod,
Or yet with age began to nod,
She made a vow she'd serve her God
In all she did.

"For now," said she, "this much I know:
My Maker doubtless made me so;
And while I'm here on earth below,
I'll keep His law.

"In this, of course, I've smashed the plan
Conceived by some designing man,
And from his codes I broke and ran,
For mercy's sake.

"For see, I had to weigh these two,
To find the path I should pursue:
And God I chose, and wouldn't you,
Instead of men?

"That is, by this I mean to say,
Where Nature points the better way,
Her laws I keep, from day to day,
With all my heart.

"And here I've ground my deepest thought,
And year by year, with patience wrought,
And this, of late, I've freely taught,
Without a fear.

"And not, that I would vengeance wreak,
On some poor man, that's grown so weak,
He scarcely can in whispers speak
Above his breath.

"For yet, my mate was always good,—
In this, I must be understood,—
And still, alas, he never could
Make glad my heart!

"But this was not in social ways,
Or vast estates, or gems that blaze,
But higher up, where childhood lays
Its smiles around.

"For we had wealth, far strewn around,
Extending on, with scarce a bound,
And marts of trade, in every town
Of consequence.

"And yet, I longed for something more,
Than babes like these had brought before,
And this, I often pondered o'er,
With deep regret.

"And once, when I went out to stroll,
I had a thirsting in my soul,
And near at hand, I saw my goal,—
A cultured man.

"And high he was in councils known,
And there he seemed to stand alone,
Like to the one who sought a throne,—
Whom Brutus stabbed.

"And while I faltered in my course,
And analyzed its every source,
It plainer grew, with greater force,
Before my eyes.

"For this I'd seen so oft before,
Among the stock that men adore,
And here this law is practised o'er
The world at large.

"And who of this should ever doubt,
Why, this is but some crying tout,
And if the truth you'd know about,
Ask old John Zohn.

"For he don't know the world is wide,
And every truth is still denied,
So you can take the other side,
And know you're right.

"And there he stays, within his groove,
And loud he vows he'll never move;
Among his stock he might improve,
With better blood.

"And more than that: Whate'er is found
Among his buildings strewn around,
And fence and shed, and e'en his ground,
Bespeak the man.

"For nought is there that's ever planned,
And for our race in every land
Much better had he been unmanned,
To stop the breed.

"And this I saw when on the farm,
Ere modesty had brought alarm,
As when I swung at father's arm,
And went abroad.

"Out o'er the pastures, far and near,
For well I love the stock to hear,
When every horse and every steer
Is thoroughbred.

"And when we'd gone all these to see,
My father oft has said to me:
'All these have got their pedigree,—
Which I possess.'

"And so, I've thought it was my Pa
Who pointed out this higher law,
For every scrub was but a straw
Beneath his feet.

"And there I learned this higher worth,
Of brute creation o'er the earth,
But of my race, I weep the dearth
That still prevails.

"And in these things I'd have you see
My thought was not alone for me,
But down through all posterity
The end I sought.

"And when my childhood was no more,
The things I learned in youth before
How oft they rapt upon my door,
I need not tell.

"For now, it was like this, you see,
My husband was not made for me,
But this at first I failed to see,
Until too late.

"And there I was tied up so tight,
For good, or bad, or wrong, or right,
Before the law, I dared not fight
The man I had.

"For he,—full well I knew he could
Support his claims as matters stood,
And in the courts, of course I should
Forever loose.

"And then I'd sob myself to sleep,
And wring my hands and often weep,
For this one thing, this secret deep,
I dare not tell.

"But while these mists before me rolled,
I found my spirit growing bold,
And unto me this prompter told
Another way:

"The ways of darkness strewn around
Among all classes that abound,
Which many of my race have found
Before my day.

"And while I hid my face in shame,
More closely yet this spirit came,
And spoke to me of lasting fame
Within my reach.

"And when all this I plainly saw,
More firmly yet I set my jaw,
And there I stood, and dared the law
Upon the books.

"And now, perhaps it's best I should
Explain so I'll be understood;
For in these things a wondrous good,
Or evil, lies.

"And here is where I'd call the State,—
For she is powerful and great,
And swing she can a mighty weight
For weal or woe.

"And in our laws, I'd place this need,
That might with ease be guaranteed,
As now we do with every breed
Of stock we have,

"And not that I would still retain
Those things that leave a lasting stain,
But something else, that seems so plain
That all should see.

"And every man that's fit to be
Connected with maternity,
The records on the books, you see,
Would show all this.

"But now, the way our race is farmed,
The maid it is, that's most alarmed,
And in this fray, she's poorly armed
To meet the foe.

"For in the male the germ is found,—
Where higher qualities abound,—
And motherhood, she's like the ground
That rears the seed.

"But equal still, within her sphere,
And greater oft she doth appear,
As when the child her hand must rear
And shape its course.

"And why should we endure this snare,
When aims in life will never square
With freckled face and crimson hair,
And all of that?

"And what of sickly children, such,
And whimperings at every touch,
And weaklings all that use a crutch
Continually?

"And what of all this poisoned train
Transmitted down to youth again,
That points to countless millions slain
From age to age?

"Is this a lawful husband sent,
That brings a life of discontent,
And why in law should this be meant,
And stand the test?

"And this is why I'd call the State,
To sponsor every bantam-weight;
And free the maid, and let his fate
Be what it might.

"And thus an outline of my plan,
And while it seems a baleful ban,
I'd force this scrub to be a man,
Or stand aside.

"And by such means I'd build a race,
So strongly built and full of grace,
Ere long, you'd see them take their place
And rule the world.

"But now, instead, instead, alas,
One clinks his gold, we let him pass,
And puny man, or braying ass,
It matters not.

"And so we have a mongrel horde,
Outbulging some, much like a gourd;
And others lank as any sword
That children wear.

"And some are short, and some are long,
And some are weak, and some are strong,
And such a God-forsaken throng
I shame to tell.

"To you, who stand before my child,
And point him out as one defiled,
With calmness, and my face unriled,
I answer back:

"Whate'er I've done, I had to do,
And this I hate much more than you,
But could I stop, and still be true
Unto my race?

"Nay, nay! For this was not the plan,
Of Him who spoke and said to man:
'Go forth and subjugate the land
And all that is.

" 'And green the hills, and prove their worth,
And till and rear for home and hearth,
And fructify the whole of earth,
And make it glad.'

"And what He said was doubtless true,
In ages old or ages new,
But weakness here can never do
What God designed.

"But men,—as yet the laws they make,
And wink they do at every rake,
And while his coin they gladly take,
They pass him on.

"But wait awhile. Another day
Is coming fast, and means to stay,
And when it comes, we'll drive away
This bastard child.

" 'More light!' the cry,—'More light for all!'
Storm-swept around us comes the call,
That none, as I, may stumbling fall
And be disgraced.

"But while these things arise and stand,
Like haunting ghosts in every land,
High time it seems that some one planned
A better way.

"For we've a pride, as well we ought,
In all this workmanship that's wrought.
But man, he spends near all his thought
In other ways.

"And there's his horse that weighs a ton,
And by his side, that puny one,
And things like this are being done
In every land.

"Likewise his vineyards over there,
Where he has made improvements rare,
And every peach, and every pear,
They look to him.

"And, give him but a place to start,
In any field of useful art,
And Godlike here he plays a part,—
Supremely grand.

"But when he comes to face his own,
As all the past has clearly shown,
With doubtful look and mumbling tone,
He turns away,—

"As though his child were lower down,
Than fruits or grains upon the ground,
Or horse, or hog, or barking hound,
That gets his care.

"And what he needs, this reckless dolt,
He needs some one his mind will jolt,
And turn his thought from calf and colt
Toward his child.

"And when I muse these things upon,
So oft I think of old John Zohn,
Of what a jinx, and what a don
The old man was.

"And there he sat before his jug,
And all the past he loved to hug,
And, filling high his foaming mug,
He drank to this.

"And so he lived his life along,
Unmoved by reason clear and strong,
Nor could he see a single wrong
In what he did.

"And every act that backward lay,
In some remote antiquity,
With frenzied speech, I've heard him say:
'Its holy ground!'

"But now he's gone, and in his place
Another one has come to face
The greatest problem of our race,
Since we began.

"And this, because we fail to see,
That we ourselves would better be,
If we would only prune the tree
That bears the seed.

"But while, as now, our efforts fail,
And children oft are weak and pale,
No grief ahead can e'er avail
To right this wrong.

"Nor may we hope that drugs and skill,
Nor doctor quack upon the hill,
Can ever give our little Will
A chance to live;

"Or drive these shadows from his room,
And give his cheeks a ruddy bloom,
While death stands gloating o'er his tomb,
And points to us,

"And says, with grimness on his face:
'Much worse this is than deep disgrace,
For thou hast sold thy child and race
For paltry gain.'

"And to you all I lay this deed,—
The fruits alone of selfish greed,
While one you loved stood by to plead
A higher law.

"And pausing now, I leave this thought,
That reason to my senses brought,
And should my lesson come to naught,
I'll rest content,—

"Content to know, for what I've done,
I've bared my heart to every one,
That I might rear this noble son
And go my way.

"And, go my way, the way I know
Reformers all have had to go,
But what of this, when one can show
A leader born?

"And so I see a brighter rift
Among these clouds that darkly drift,
Forever on, and onward swift,
Around my race,—

"A rift of gladness, clear and bright,
That sweeps my being with delight,
And makes the day, and makes the night
The same as one;

"The same for all who seek the good,
Expressed in yearning motherhood,
And by this thought I've always stood,
To force reforms.

"A stronger male, a nobler mate,
To guard the destiny of State,
And make our country truly great,
In sturdy men!"

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